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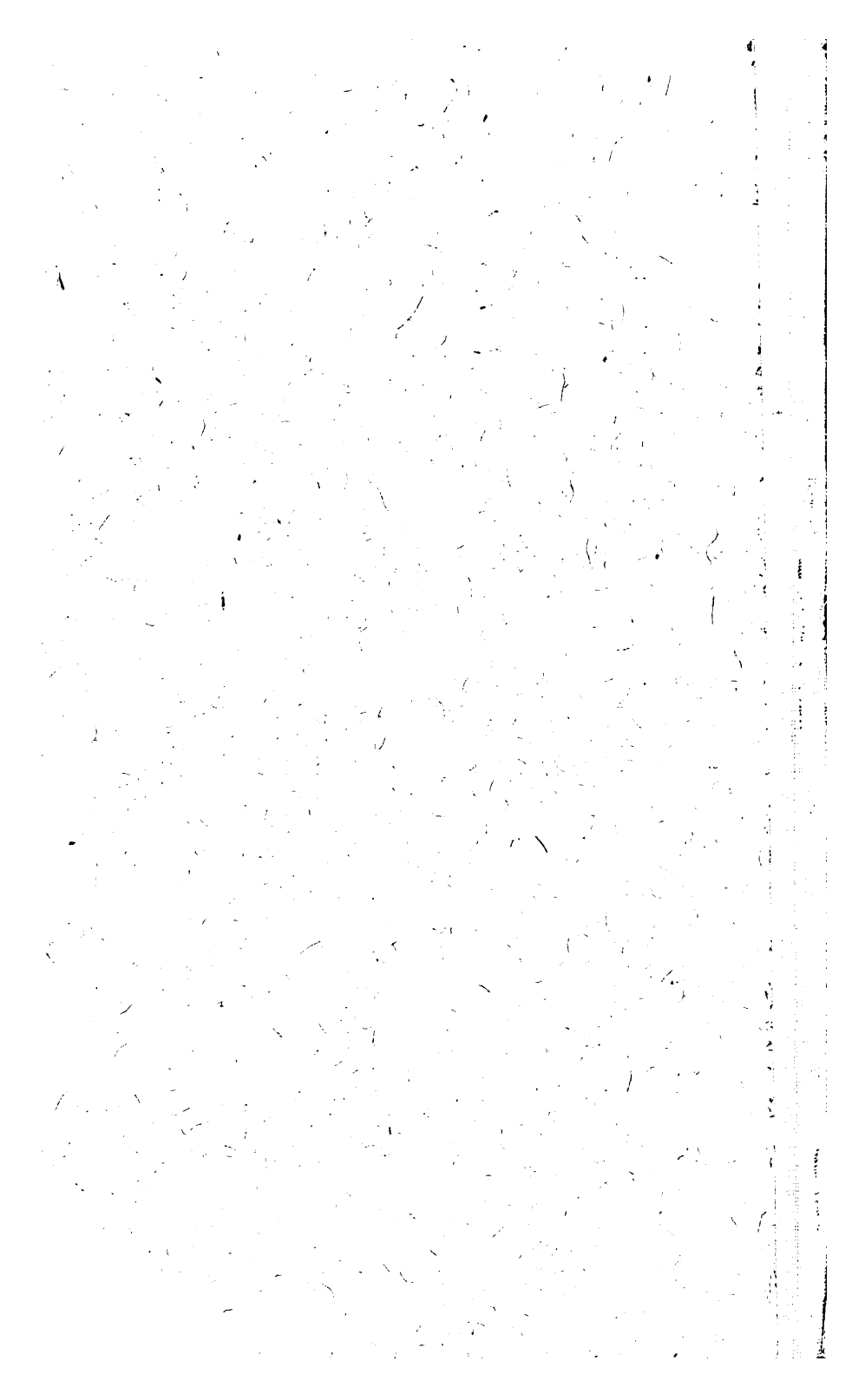
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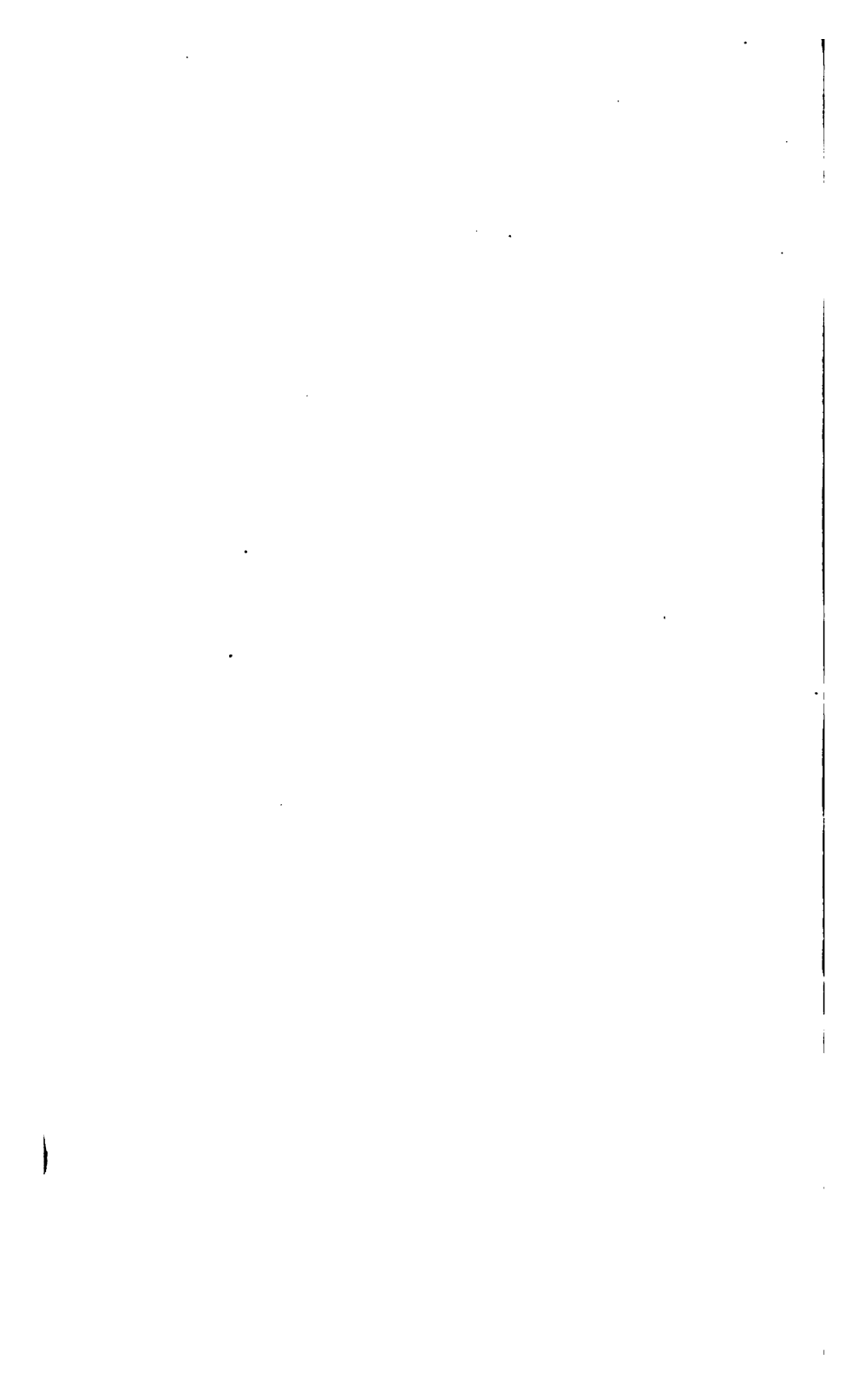
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C R I T I C I S M.

VOLUME III.

*By Henry Home  
(Lord Kames)*

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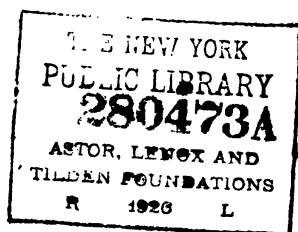
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# ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM.

C H A P. XIX.

## COMPARISONS.

**C**OMPARISONS, as observed above \*, serve two different purposes: When addressed to the understanding, their purpose is to instruct; when to the heart, their purpose is to give pleasure. With respect to the latter, a comparison may be employ'd to produce various pleasures by different means. First, by suggesting some unusual

\* Chap. 8.

resemblance or contrast: second, by setting an object in the strongest light: third, by associating an object with others that are agreeable: fourth, by elevating an object: and, fifth, by depressing it. And that comparisons may produce various pleasures by these different means, appears from what is said in the chapter above cited; and will be made still more evident by examples, which shall be given after premising some general observations.

An object of one sense cannot be compared to an object of another; for such objects are totally separated from each other, and have no circumstance in common to admit either resemblance or contrast. Objects of hearing may be compared; as also of taste, and of touch. But the chief fund of comparison are objects of sight; because, in writing or speaking, things can only be compared in idea, and the ideas of visible objects are by far more lively than those of any other sense.

It has no good effect to compare things by way of simile that are of the same kind, nor to contrast things of different kinds.

The

The reason is given in the chapter cited above; and the reason shall be illustrated by examples. The first is a resemblance instituted betwixt two objects so nearly related as to make little or no impression.

This just rebuke inflam'd the Lycian crew,  
 They join, they thicken, and th' assault renew;  
 Unmov'd th'embodiy'd Greeks their fury dare,  
 And fix'd support the weight of all the war;  
 Nor could the Greeks repel the Lycian pow'rs,  
 Nor the bold Lycians force the Grecian tow'rs.  
 As on the confines of adjoining grounds,  
 Two stubborn swains with blows dispute their  
     bounds;  
 They tugg, they sweat; but neither gain, nor  
     yield,  
 One foot, one inch, of the contended field:  
 Thus obstinate to death, they fight, they fall;  
 Nor these can keep, nor those can win the wall.

*Iliad, xii. 505.*

Another from Milton labours under the same defect. Speaking of the fallen angels searching for mines of gold:

A numerous brigade hasten'd: as when bands  
 Of pioneers with spade and pick-ax arm'd

Forerun

Fortrun the royal camp to trench a field  
Or cast a rampart.

The next shall be of things contrasted  
that are of different kinds.

*Queen.* What, is my Richard both in shape and  
mind  
Transform'd and weak? Hath Bolingbroke de-  
pos'd  
Thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?  
The lion, dying, thrusteth forth his paw,  
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage  
To be o'erpower'd: and wilt thou, pupil-like,  
Take thy correction mildly, kiss the rod,  
And fawn on rage with base humility?

*Richard II. act 5. sc. 1.*

This comparison has scarce any force. A man and a lion are of different species; and there is no such resemblance betwixt them in general, as to produce any strong effect by contrasting particular attributes or circumstances.

A third general observation is, That abstract terms can never be the subject of comparison, otherwise than by being personified.

Shakespear



Ch. XIX. COMPARISONS.

7

Shakespear compares adversity to a toad, and slander to the bite of a crocodile; but in such comparisons these abstract terms must be imagined sensible beings.

I now proceed to illustrate by particular instances the different means by which comparison can afford pleasure; and, in the order above established, I shall begin with those instances that are agreeable by suggesting some unusual resemblance or contrast:

Sweet are the uses of Adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in her head.

*As you like it, act 2. sc. 1.*

*Gardiner.* Bolingbroke hath seiz'd the wasteful  
King.

What pity is't that he had not so trimm'd  
And dress'd his land, as we this garden dress,  
And wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees;  
Left, being over proud with sap and blood,  
With too much riches it confound itself.  
Had he done so to great and growing men,  
They might have liv'd to bear, and he to taste  
Their fruits of duty. All superfluous branches

We

We hop away, that bearing boughs may live:  
 Had he done so, himself had borne the crown;  
 Which waste and idle hours have quite thrown  
 down.

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 7.*

See, how the Morning opes her golden gates,  
 And takes her farewell of the glorious sun;  
 How well resembles it the prime of youth,  
 Trim'd like a yonker prancing to his love.

*Second Part Henry VI. act 2. sc. 1.*

*Brutus.* O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,  
 That carries anger as the flint bears fire;  
 Who, much inforced, shows a hasty spark,  
 And straight is cold again.

*Julius Cæsar, act 4. sc. 3.*

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
 Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:  
 As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds,  
 Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread  
 Heav'n's cheerful face, the lowering element  
 Scowls o'er the darken'd landscape, snow, and  
 shower;  
 If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet  
 Extend his ev'ning-beam, the fields revive,

The

The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

*Paradise Lost, book 2,*

The last exertion of courage compared to  
the blaze of a lamp before extinguishing,  
*Tasso Gierusalem, canto 19. st. 22,*

As the bright stars, and milky way,  
Shew'd by the night, are hid by day;  
So we in that accomplish'd mind,  
Help'd by the night, new graces find,  
Which, by the splendor of her view  
Dazzled before, we never knew.

*Waller,*

None of the foregoing similes, as it appears to me, have the effect to add any lustre to the principal subject; and therefore the pleasure they afford, must arise from suggesting resemblances that are not obvious; I mean the chief pleasure; for undoubtedly a beautiful subject introduced to form the simile affords a separate pleasure, which is felt in the similes mentioned, particularly in that cited from Milton.

The next effect of a comparison in the

order mentioned, is to place an object in a strong point of view; which I think is done sensibly in the following similes.

As when two scales are charg'd with doubtful loads,

From side to side the trembling balance nods,  
(While some laborious matron, just and poor,  
With nice exactness weighs her woolly store),  
Till pois'd aloft, the resting beam suspends  
Each equal weight; nor this nor that descends:  
So stood the war, till Hector's matchless might,  
With fates prevailing, turn'd the scale of fight.  
Fierce as a whirlwind up the walls he flies,  
And fires his host with loud repeated cries.

*Iliad, b. xii. 521.*

Ut flos in septis secretis nascitur hortis,  
Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,  
Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber,  
Multi illum pueri, multæ cupiere puellæ.  
Idem, cum tenui carptus destituit ungui,  
Nulli illum pueri, nullæ cupiere puellæ.  
Sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis; sed  
Cum castum amisit, polluto corpore, florem,  
Nec pueris jucunda manet, nec cara puellis.

*Catullus.*

The

The imitation of this beautiful simile by *Ariosto*, *canto* 1. *st.* 42. falls short of the original. It is also in part imitated by Pope \*.

*Lucretia*. I do not seek to quench your love's  
hot fire,

But qualify the fire's extreme rage,  
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

*Julia*. The more thou damm'st it up, the more  
it burns :

The current, that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth  
rage ;

But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with th' enamel'd stones  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.

And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

Then let me go, and hinder not my course ;

I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,  
And make a pastime of each weary step  
Till the last step have brought me to my love ;  
And there I'll rest, as, after much turmoil,  
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 2. *sc.* 10.

\* *Dunciad*, b. 4. l. 495.

——— She never told her love,  
 But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,  
 Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought;  
 And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
 She sat like Patience on a monument,  
 Smiling at Grief.

*Twelfth-Night, act 2. sc. 6*

*York.* Then, as I said, the Duke, great Boling-  
 broke,  
 Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,  
 Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,  
 With slow but stately pace, kept on his course:  
 While all tongues cry'd, God save thee, Boling-  
 broke.

*Duchefs.* Alas! poor Richard, where rides he  
 the while?

*York.* As in a theatre, the eyes of men,  
 After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,  
 Are idly bent on him that enters next,  
 Thinking his prattle to be tedious:  
 Even so, or with much more contempt, mens eyes  
 Did stowl on Richard; no man cry'd, God save  
 him!

No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;  
 But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;  
 Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,  
 His face still combating with tears and smiles,

The

The badges of his grief and patience;  
That had not God, for some strong purpose,  
steel'd

The hearts of men, they must perforce have  
melted;

And barbarism itself have pitied him.

*Richard II. act 5. sc. 3.*

*Northumberland.* How doth my son and brother?

Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek

Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,

So dull, so dead in look, so wo-be-gone,

Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,

And would have told him, half his Troy was  
burn'd;

But Priam found the fire, ere he his tongue:

And I my Percy's death, ere thou report'st it.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 3.*

Why, then I do but dream on sov'reignty,

Like one that stands upon a promontory,

And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,

Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,

And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,

Saying, he'll lave it dry to have his way:

So do I wish, the crown being so far off,

And so I chide the means that keep me from it,

And

And so (I say) I'll cut the canker off,  
 Flattering my mind with things impossible.

*Third Part Henry VI. act 3. sc. 3.*

———— Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
 And then is heard no more.

*Macbeth, act 5. sc. 5.*

O thou Goddess,  
 Thou divine Nature! how thyself thou blazon'st  
 In these two princely boys! they are as gentle  
 As zephyrs blowing below the violet,  
 Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,  
 (Their royal blood inchas'd) as the rud'st wind,  
 That by the top doth take the mountain-pine,  
 And make him stoop to th' vale.

*Cymbeline, act 4. sc. 4.*

The fight obtained of the city of Jerusalem  
 by the Christian army, compared to that of  
 land discovered after a long voyage, Tasso's  
*Gierusalem, canto 3. st. 4.* The fury of Ri-  
 naldo subsiding when not opposed, to that  
 of wind or water when it has a free passage;  
*canto 20. st. 58.*

At



As words convey but a faint and obscure notion of great numbers, a poet, to give a high notion of the object he describes with regard to number, does well to compare it to what is familiar and commonly known. Thus Homer \* compares the Grecian army in point of number to a swarm of bees. In another passage † he compares it to that profusion of leaves and flowers which appear in the spring, or of insects in a summer's evening. And Milton,

—————As when the potent rod  
Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day  
Wav'd round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,  
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
Like night, and darken'd all the land of Nile ;  
So numberless were those bad angels seen,  
Hovering on wing under the cope of hell,  
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires.

*Paradise Lost, book 1.*

Such comparisons have, by some writers ‡, been condemned for the lowness of

\* Book 2. l. 111.

† Book 2. l. 551.

‡ See *Vidæ Poetic.* lib. 2. l. 282.

the images introduced : but surely without reason ; for, with regard to numbers, they put the principal subject in a strong light.

The foregoing comparisons operate by resemblance ; others have the same effect by contrast :

*York.* I am the last of Noble Edward's sons,  
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first :  
In war, was never lion rag'd more fierce ;  
In peace, was never gentle lamb more mild ;  
Than was that young and princely gentleman,  
His face thou hast ; for even so look'd he,  
Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours.  
But when he frown'd, it was against the French,  
And not against his friends. His noble hand  
Did win what he did spend ; and spent not that  
Which his triumphant father's hand had won.  
His hands were guilty of no kindred's blood,  
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.  
Oh, Richard ! York is too far gone with grief,  
Or else he never would compare between.

*Richard II. act 2. sc. 3.*

Milton has a peculiar talent in embellishing the principal subject by associating it with others that are agreeable, which is the

the third end of a comparison. Similes of this kind have, beside, a separate effect: they diversify the narration by new images that are not strictly necessary to the comparison: they are short episodes, which, without distracting us from the principal subject, afford great delight by their beauty and variety:

He scarce had ceas'd, when the superior fiend  
Was moving toward the shore; his pond'rous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At ev'ning from the top of Fesole,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.

*Milton, b. 1.*

———— Thus far these, beyond  
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observ'd  
Their dread commander. He, above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost  
All her original brightness, nor appear'd  
Less than arch-angel ruin'd, and th' excess  
Of glory obscur'd: as when the sun new-risen

Looks through the horizontal misty air  
 Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon  
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
 On half the nations, and with fear of change  
 Perplexes monarchs.

*Milton, b. 1.*

As when a vulture on Imaus bred,  
 Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,  
 Dislodging from a region scarce of prey  
 To gorge the flesh of lambs, or yeanling kids,  
 On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the  
 springs  
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,  
 But in his way lights on the barren plains  
 Of Sericana, where Chineses drive  
 With sails and wind their cany waggons light:  
 So on this windy sea of land, the fiend  
 Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey.

*Milton, b. 3.*

————— Yet higher than their tops  
 The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung :  
 Which to our general fire gave prospect large  
 Into this nether empire neighbouring round.  
 And higher than that wall, a circling row  
 Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit,  
 Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,  
 Appear'd, with gay enamel'd colours mix'd,

On

On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams  
 Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,  
 When God hath shew'r'd the earth; so lovely  
 seem'd

That landscape: and of pure now purer air  
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires  
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive  
 All sadness but despair: now gentle gales  
 Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense  
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
 Mozambic, off at sea North-east winds blow  
 Sabean odour from the spicy shore  
 Of Arabie the Blest; with such delay  
 Well pleas'd they slack their course, and many a  
 league,

Chear'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.

*Milton, b. 4.*

With regard to similes of this kind, it will readily occur to the reader, that when the resembling subject or circumstance is once properly introduced in a simile, the mind passes easily to the new objects, and is transitorily amused with them, without feeling any disgust at the slight interruption. Thus, in fine weather, the momentary excursions of

a traveller for agreeable prospects or sumptuous buildings, cheer his mind, relieve him from the languor of uniformity, and without much lengthening his journey in reality, shorten it greatly in appearance.

Next of comparisons that aggrandize or elevate. These make stronger impressions than any other sort; the reason of which may be gathered from the chapter of grandeur and sublimity, and, without reasoning, will be evident from the following instances.

As when a flame the winding valley fills,  
And runs on crackling shrubs between the hills,  
Then o'er the stubble up the mountain flies,  
Fires the high woods, and blazes to the skies,  
This way and that, the spreading torrent roars;  
So sweeps the hero through the wasted shores.  
Around him wide immense destruction pours,  
And earth is delug'd with the sanguine show'rs.

*Iliad* xx. 569.

Through blood, through death, Achilles still proceeds,  
O'er slaughter'd heroes, and o'er rolling steeds.

As

As when avenging flames with fury driv'n  
 On guilty towns exert the wrath of Heav'n,  
 The pale inhabitants, some fall, some fly,  
 And the red vapours purple all the sky.  
 So rag'd Achilles: Death, and dire dismay,  
 And toils, and terrors, fill'd the dreadful day.

*Iliad xxi. 605.*

Methinks, King Richard and myself should meet  
 With no less terror than the elements  
 Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock,  
 At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.

*Richard II. act. 3. sc. 5.*

I beg peculiar attention to the following simile, for a reason that shall be mentioned.

Thus breathing death, in terrible array,  
 The close-compacted legions urg'd their way:  
 Fierce they drove on, impatient to destroy;  
 Troy charg'd the first, and Hector first of Troy,  
 As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn,  
 A rock's round fragment flies with fury born,  
 (Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)  
 Precipitate the pond'rous mass descends:  
 From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds:  
 At every shock the crackling wood resounds;  
 Still gath'ring force, it smoaks; and urg'd amain,  
 Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to  
 the plain;

There

There stops — So Hector. Their whole force he  
 prov'd,  
 Resistless when he rag'd; and when he stopt, un-  
 mov'd.

*Iliad* xiii. 187.

The image of a falling rock is certainly not elevating\*. Yet undoubtedly the foregoing image fires and swells the mind. It is grand therefore, if not sublime. And that there is a real, though delicate distinction, betwixt these two feelings, will be illustrated from the following simile.

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,  
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell  
 On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,  
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield  
 Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge  
 He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee  
 His massy spear upstaid; as if on earth  
 Winds under ground or waters forcing way  
 Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat  
 Half sunk with all pines.

*Milton, b. 6.*

\* See chap. 4.



A comparison by contrast may contribute to grandeur or elevation, not less than by resemblance; of which the following comparison of Lucan is a remarkable instance.

*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*

Considering that the Heathen deities possessed a rank but one degree above that of mankind, I think it scarce possible, by a single expression, to elevate or dignify more one of the human species, than is done by this comparison. I am sensible, at the same time, that such a comparison among Christians, who entertain juster notions of the Deity, would justly be reckoned extravagant and absurd.

The last article mentioned, is that of lessening or depressing a hated or disagreeable object; which is effectually done by resembling it to any thing that is low or despicable. Thus Milton, in his description of the rout of the rebel-angels, happily expresses their terror and dismay in the following simile.

---

As a herd  
 Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd  
 Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursu'd  
 With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
 And crystal wall of heav'n, which op'ning wide,  
 Rowl'd inward, and a spacious gap disclos'd  
 Into the wasteful deep; the monstrous sight  
 Strook them with horror backward, but far worse  
 Urg'd them behind; headlong themselves they  
 threw  
 Down from the verge of heav'n.

*Milton, b. 6.*

In the same view, Homer, I think, may be defended, in comparing the shouts of the Trojans in battle, to the noise of cranes \*, and to the bleating of a flock of sheep †; and it is no objection, that these are low images; for by opposing the noisy march of the Trojans to the silent and manly march of the Greeks, he certainly intended to lessen the former. Addison ‡, imagining the figure that men make in the sight of a superior being, takes opportunity to mor-

\* Beginning of book 3.

† Book 4. l. 498.

‡ Guardian No. 153.

tify their pride by comparing them to a swarm of pismires.

A comparison that has none of the good effects mentioned in this discourse, but is built upon common and trifling circumstances, makes a mighty silly figure: “ Non  
“ sum nescius, grandia consilia a multis  
“ plerumque causis, ceu magna navigia a  
“ plurimis remis, impelli \*.”

By this time I imagine the different purposes of comparison, and the various impressions it makes on the mind, are sufficiently illustrated by proper examples. This was an easy work. It is more difficult to lay down rules about the propriety or impropriety of comparisons; in what circumstances they may be introduced, and in what circumstances they are out of place. It is evident, that a comparison is not proper upon every occasion; a man in his cool and sedate moments, is not disposed to poetical flights, nor to sacrifice truth and reality to the delusive operations of the imagination; far less is he so disposed, when oppressed with cares, or interested in some important transaction

\* Strada de bello Belgico.

that occupies him totally. The region of comparison and of all figurative expression, lies betwixt these two extremes. It is observable, that a man, when elevated or animated by any passion, is disposed to elevate or animate all his objects : he avoids familiar names, exalts objects by circumlocution and metaphor, and gives even life and voluntary action to inanimate beings. In this warmth of mind, the highest poetical flights are indulged, and the boldest similes and metaphors relished \*. But without soaring so high, the mind is frequently in a tone to relish chaste and moderate ornament ; such as comparisons that set the principal object in a strong point of view, or that embellish and diversify the narration. In general, when by any animating passion, whether pleasant or painful, an impulse is given to the imagination ; we are in that condition wonderfully disposed to every sort of figurative expression, and in particular to com-

\* It is accordingly observed by Longinus, in his treatise of the Sublime, that the proper time for metaphor, is when the passions are so swelled as to hurry on like a torrent.

parisons. This in a great measure is evident from the comparisons already mentioned; and shall be further illustrated by other examples. Love, for example, in its infancy, rousing the imagination, prompts the heart to display itself in figurative language, and in similes:

*Troilus.* Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's  
love,

What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?  
Her bed is India, there she lies, a pearl:  
Between our Ilium, and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood;  
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar  
Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

*Troilus and Cressida, act 1. sc. 1.*

Again,

Come, gentle Night; come, loving black-brow'd  
Night!

Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,  
Take him, and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heav'n so fine,  
That all the world shall be in love with Night  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

*Romeo and Juliet, act 3. sc. 4.*

The dread of a misfortune, however imminent, involving always some doubt and uncertainty, agitates the mind, and excites the imagination:

*Wolsey.* ————— Nay, then, farewell;  
I've touch'd the highest point of all my greatness,  
And from that full meridian of my glory  
I haste now to my setting. I shall fall,  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more.

*Henry VIII. act. 3. sc. 4.*

But it will be a better illustration of the present head, to give examples where comparisons are improperly introduced. I have had already occasion to observe, that similes are not the language of a man in his ordinary state of mind, going about the common affairs of life. For that reason, the following speech of a gardiner to his servants, is extremely improper.

Go bind thou up yon dangling apricocks  
Which, like unruly children, make their sire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight;  
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.  
Go thou, and like an executioner,

Cut

Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays,  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth :  
All must be even in our government.

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 7.*

The fertility of Shakespear's vein betrays him frequently into this error. There is the same impropriety in another simile of his :

*Hero.* Good Margaret, run thee into the parlour;

There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice;  
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula  
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse  
Is all of her; say, that thou overheard'st us:  
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,  
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter; like to favourites,  
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride  
Against that power that bred it.

*Much ado about nothing, act 3. sc. 1.*

Rooted grief, deep anguish, terror, remorse, despair, and all the severe dispiriting passions, are declared enemies, perhaps not to figurative language in general, but undoubtedly to the pomp and solemnity of comparison.

Upon

Upon this account the simile pronounced by young Rutland under terror of death from an inveterate enemy, and praying mercy, is unnatural :

So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch  
That trembles under his devouring paws ;  
And so he walks insulting o'er his prey,  
And so he comes to rend his limbs afunder.  
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,  
And not with such a cruel threat'ning look.

*Third part Henry VI. act 1. sc. 5.*

Nothing appears more out of place, or more awkwardly introduced, than the following simile.

*Lucia.* ——— Farewell, my Portius,  
Farewell, though death is in the word, *for-ever!*  
*Portius.* Stay, Lucia, stay ; what dost thou say,  
*for-ever?*

*Lucia.* Have I not sworn ? If, Portius, thy success  
Must throw thy brother on his fate, farewell :  
Oh, how shall I repeat the word *for-ever!*

*Portius.* Thus, o'er the dying lamp th' unsteady  
flame  
Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,  
And falls again, as loath to quit its hold.

———Thou



—Thou must not go, my soul still hovers o'er  
thee,

And can't get loose.

*Cato, act 3. sc. 2.*

Nor doth the simile which closes the first act of the same tragedy, make its appearance with a much better grace; the situation there represented, being too dispiriting for a simile. A simile is improper for one who dreads the discovery of a secret machination.

*Zara.* The mute not yet return'd! Ha! 'twas  
the King,

The King that parted hence! frowning he went;  
His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down  
Their red and angry beams; as if his sight  
Would, like the raging Dog-star, scorch the earth,  
And kindle ruin in its course.

*Mourning Bride, act 5. sc. 3.*

A man spent and dispirited after losing a battle, is not disposed to heighten or illustrate his discourse by similes:

*York.* With this we charg'd again; but out!  
alas,

We bodg'd again; as I have seen a swan

With

With bootless labour swim against the tide,  
 And spend her strength with over-matching waves,  
 Ah! hark, the fatal followers do pursue.  
 And I am faint and cannot fly their fury.  
 The sands are number'd that make up my life;  
 Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

*Third part Henry VI. act 1. sc. 6.*

Far less is a man disposed to similes who is  
 not only defeated in a pitch'd battle, but  
 lies at the point of death mortally wounded.

*Warwick.* ——— My mangled body shews,  
 My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart  
 shews,

That I must yield my body to the earth,  
 And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.  
 Thus yields the cedar to the ax's edge,  
 Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle;  
 Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,  
 Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading  
 tree,  
 And kept low shrubs from winter's pow'rful wind.

*Third part Henry VI. act 5. sc. 3.*

Queen Katharine, deserted by the King and  
 in the deepest affliction upon her divorce,  
 could not be disposed to any fallies of ima-  
 gination: and for that reason, the fol-  
 lowing

lowing simile, however beautiful in the mouth of a spectator, is scarce proper in her own.

I am the most unhappy woman living,  
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,  
No friends, no hope! no kindred weep for me!  
Almost no grave allowed me! like the lily,  
That once was mistress of the field, and flourish'd,  
I'll hang my head and perish.

*King Henry VIII. act 3. sc. 1.*

Similes thus unseasonably introduced, are finely ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*:

*Bayes.* Now here she must make a simile.

*Smith.* Where's the necessity of that, Mr Bayes?

*Bayes.* Because she's surpris'd; that's a general rule; you must ever make a simile when you are surpris'd; 'tis a new way of writing.

A comparison is not always faultless, even where it is properly introduced. I have endeavoured above to give a general view of the different ends to which a comparison may contribute. A comparison, like other human productions, may fall short of its end; and of this defect instances are not

rare even among good writers. To complete the present subject, it will be necessary to make some observations upon such faulty comparisons. I begin with observing, that nothing can be more erroneous than to institute a comparison too faint : a distant resemblance or contrast, fatigues the mind with its obscurity instead of amusing it, and tends not to fulfil any one end of a comparison. The following similes seem to labour under this defect :

Albus ut obscuro deterget nubila cœlo  
 Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres  
 Perpetuus ; sic tu sapiens finire memento  
 Tristitiam vitæque labores,  
 Molli, Plance, mero.

*Horace, Carm. l. 1. ode 7.*

—— Medio dux agmine Turnus  
 Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est.  
 Ceu septem surgens sedatis amnibus altus  
 Per tacitum Ganges : aut pingui flumine Nilus  
 Cum refluit campis, et jam se condidit alveo.

*Æneid ix. 28.*

Talibus orabat, talesque miserrima fletus  
 Fertque refertque soror : sed nullus ille movetur  
 Fletibus.

Flatibus, aut voces illas tractabilis audit.  
 Fata obstant : placidasque viri Deus obstruit aures.  
 Ac veluti annoso validam cum robore quereum  
 Alpini Boreæ, nunc hinc, nunc flatibus illinc  
 Eruere inter se certant ; it stridor ; et altè  
 Consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes :  
 Ipsa hæret scopulis : et quantum vertice ad auras  
 Æthereas, tantum radice in tartara tendit.  
 Haud secus assiduè hinc atque hinc vocibus heros  
 Tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas :  
 Mens immota manet, lacrymæ volvuntur inanes. . .  
*Æneid iv. 437.*

*K. Rich.* Give me the crown.—Here, cousin,  
 seize the crown,  
 Here, on this side, my hand ; on that side, thine.  
 Now is this golden crown like a deep well,  
 That owes two buckets, filling one another ;  
 The emptier ever dancing in the air,  
 The other down, unseen and full of water ;  
 That bucket down, and full of tears, am I ;  
 Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.  
*Richard II. act 4. sc. 3.*

*King John.* Oh ! Cousin, thou art come to see  
 mine eye ;  
 The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burnt ;  
 E 2 And

And all the shrowds wherewith my life should  
fail,

Are turned to one thread, one little hair :  
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,  
Which holds but till thy news be uttered.

*King John, act 5. sc. 10.*

*York.* My uncles both are slain in rescuing me :  
And all my followers, to the eager foe  
Turn back, and fly like ships before the wind,  
Or lambs pursu'd by hunger-starved wolves.

*Third Part Henry VI. act 1. sc. 6.*

The latter of the two similes is good. The former, because of the faintness of the resemblance, produces no good effect, and crowds the narration with an useless image.

The next error I shall mention is a capital one. In an epic poem, or in any elevated subject, a writer ought to avoid raising a simile upon a low image, which never fails to bring down the principal subject. In general, it is a rule, that a grand object ought never to be resembled to one that is diminutive, however delicate the resemblance may be. It is the peculiar character  
of

of a grand object to fix the attention, and swell the mind: in this state, it is disagreeable to contract the mind to a minute object, however elegant. The resembling an object to one that is greater, has, on the contrary, a good effect, by raising or swelling the mind. One passes with satisfaction from a small to a great object; but cannot be drawn down, without reluctance, from great to small. Hence the following similes are faulty.

Meanwhile the troops beneath Patroclus' care,  
Invade the Trojans, and commence the war.  
As wasps, provok'd by children in their play,  
Pour from their mansions by the broad high-way,  
In swarms the guiltless traveller engage,  
Whet all their stings, and call forth all their rage;  
All rise in arms, and with a general cry  
Assert their waxen domes, and buzzing progeny:  
Thus from the tents the fervent legion swarms,  
So loud their clamours, and so keen their arms.

*Iliad xvi. 312.*

So burns the vengeful hornet (soul all o'er)  
Repul'd in vain, and thirsty still of gore;  
(Bold son of air and heat) on angry wings  
Untam'd, untir'd, he turns, attacks and stings.

Fir'd

Fir'd with like ardour fierce Atreides flew,  
And sent his soul with ev'ry lance he threw.

*Iliad* xvii. 642.

Instant ardentès Tyrii : pars ducere muros,  
Molirique arcem, et manibus subvolvere saxa;  
Pars aptare locum testis, et concludere sulcos.  
Jura magistratúsque legunt, sanctumque senatum.  
Hic portus alii effodiunt : hic alta theatris  
Fundamenta locant alii, immanesque columnas  
Rupibus excidunt, scenis decora alta futuris.  
Qualis apes æstate nova per florea rura  
Exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos  
Educunt foetus, aut cum liquentia mella  
Stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas,  
Aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto  
Ignavum fucos pecus a præsepibus arcent.  
Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella.

*Æneid* i. 427.

To describe bees gathering honey as resembling the builders of Carthage, would have a much better effect.

Tum vero Teucri incumbunt, et littore celsas  
Deducunt toto naves : natae undæ carinæ;  
Frondentisque ferunt remos, et robora sylvis  
Infabricata, fugæ studio.  
Migrantes cornas, conque ex arboribus ruentes.

Ac



Ac veluti ingentem formicæ farris acervum  
Cum populant, hyemalis memores, testoque repe-  
nunt :

It nigrum campis agmen, prædamque per herbas  
Convectant calle angusto : pars grandia trudent  
Obnixæ frumenta humeris : pars agmina cogunt,  
Castigantque moras : opere omnis semita fervet.

*Æneid. iv. 397.*

The following simile has not any one  
beauty to recommend it. The subject is  
Amata the wife of King Latinus.

Tum vero infelix, ingentibus excita monstis,  
Immensam sine more furit lymphata per urbem :  
Cæci quondam torto volitans sub verbere turbo,  
Quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum  
Intenti ludo exerceant. Ille æstus habena  
Curvatis fertur spatii : stupet inscia turba,  
Impubesque manus, mirata volubile buxum :  
Dant animos plagæ. Non cursu segnior illo  
Per medias urbes agitur, populosque feroces.

*Æneid. vii. 376.*

This simile seems to border upon the bur-  
lesque.

An error opposite to the former, is the  
introducing a resembling image, so elevated  
or

or great as to bear no proportion to the principal subject. The remarkable disparity betwixt them, being the most striking circumstance, seizes the mind, and never fails to depress the principal subject by contrast, instead of raising it by resemblance; and if the disparity be exceeding great, the simile takes on an air of burlesque; nothing being more ridiculous than to force an object out of its proper rank in nature, by equalling it with one greatly superior or greatly inferior. This will be evident from the following comparisons.

Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella,  
 Ac veluti lentis Cyclopes fulmina massis  
 Cum properant: alii taurinis follibus auras  
 Accipiunt, redduntque: alii stridentia tingunt  
 Æra laçu: gemit impositis incudibus Ætna:  
 Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt  
 In numerum; versantque tenaci forcipe ferrum.  
 Non aliter (si parva licet componere magnis)  
 Cecropias innatus apes amor urget habendi,  
 Munere quamque suo. Grandævis oppida curæ,  
 Et munire favos, et Dædala fingere testæ.  
 At fessæ multâ referunt se nocte minores,  
 Crura thymo plenæ: pascuntur et arbuta passim,

Ex

Et glaucas salices, easiamque crocumque rubentem,  
Et pinguem tiliam, et ferrugineos hyacinthos.  
Omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus unus.

*Georgic. iv. 169.*

Tum Bitian ardentem oculis animisque frementem;  
Non jaculo, neque enim jaculo vitam ille dedisset;  
Sed magnum stridens contorta falarica venit  
Fulminis asta modo, quam nec duo taurea terga,  
Nec duplici squama lorica fidelis et auro  
Sustinuit: collapsa ruunt immania membra:  
Dat tellus gemitum, et clypeum super intonat in-  
gens.

Qualis in Euboico Baiarum littore quondam  
Saxea pila cadit, magnis quam molibus ante  
Constructam jaciunt ponto: sic illa ruinam  
Prona trahit, penitusque vadis illisa recumbit:  
Miscet se maria, et nigræ attolluntur arenæ:  
Tum sonitu Prochyta alta tremit, durumque cubile  
Inarime Jovis imperiis imposta Typhoëo.  
*Æneid. ix. 703.*

Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,  
So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.  
*Odyssey xxi. 51.*

Such a simile upon the simplest of all ac-  
tions, that of opening a lock, is pure bur-  
lesque.

A writer of delicacy will avoid drawing his comparisons from any image that is nauseous, ugly, or remarkably disagreeable: for however strong the resemblance may be, more will be lost than gained by such comparison. Therefore I cannot help condemning, though with some reluctance, the following simile, or rather metaphor.

O thou fond many ! with what loud applause  
 Did'st thou beat heav'n with blessing Bolingbroke  
 Before he was what thou wou'dst have him be ?  
 And now being trimm'd up in thine own desires,  
 Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him,  
 That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up,  
 And so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
 Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard,  
 And now thou wou'dst eat thy dead vomit up,  
 And howl'st to find it.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 6.*

The strongest objection that can lie against a comparison, is, that it consists in words only, not in sense. Such false coin, or bastard wit, does extremely well in burlesque; but is far below the dignity of the epic, or of any serious composition :

The

The noble sister of Poplicola,  
The moon of Rome; chaste as the isicle  
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,  
And hangs on Dian's temple.

*Coriolanus, act 5. sc. 3.*

There is evidently no resemblance betwixt an isicle and a woman, chaste or unchaste. But chastity is cold in a metaphorical sense, and an isicle is cold in a proper sense; and this verbal resemblance, in the hurry and glow of composing, has been thought a sufficient foundation for the simile. Such phantom similes are mere witticisms, which ought to have no quarter, except where purposely introduced to provoke laughter. Lucian, in his dissertation upon history, talking of a certain author, makes the following comparison, which is verbal merely.

This author's descriptions are so cold, that they surpass the Caspian snow, and all the ice of the north.

Virgil has not escaped this puerility :

—— Galathæa thymo mihi dulcior Hyblæ.

*Bucol. vii. 37.*

—— Ego Sardois videar tibi amarior herbis.

*Ibid. 41.*

Gallo, cujus amor tantum mihi crescit in horas,

Quantum vere novo viridis se subjicit alnus.

*Buccol. x. 73.*

Nor Taffo, in his *Aminta* :

Picciola e' l'ape, e fa col picciol morfo

Pur gravi, e pur moleste le ferite;

Ma, qual cosa é più picciola d'amore,

Se in ogni breve spatio entra, e s'asconde

In ogni breve spatio? hor, sotto a l'ombra

De le palpebre, hor trà minuti rivi

D'un biondo crine, hor dentro le pozzette,

Che forma un dolce riso in bella guancia;

E pur fá tanto grandi, e si mortali,

E così immedicabili le piaghe.

*Act 2. sc. 1.*

Nor Boileau, the chastest of all writers;  
and that even in his art of poetry:

*Ainsi*

Ainsi tel autrefois, qu'on vit avec Faret  
 Charbonner de ses vers les murs d'un cabaret,  
 S'en va mal à propos, d'une voix insolente,  
 Chanter du peuple He'breu la fuite triomphante,  
 Et poursuivant Moïse au travers des déserts,  
 Court avec Pharaon se noyer dans les mers.

*Chant. I. l. 21.*

—— But for their spirits and souls  
 This word *rebellion* had froze them up  
 As fish are in a pond.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 3.*

*Queen:* The pretty vaulting sea refus'd to drown  
 me ;  
 Knowing, that thou wou'dst have me drown'd on  
 shore  
 With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness.

*Second Part Henry VI. act 3. sc. 6.*

Here there is no manner of resemblance  
 but in the word *drown* ; for there is no real  
 resemblance betwixt being drown'd at sea,  
 and dying of grief at land. But perhaps  
 this sort of tinsel wit, may have a propriety  
 in it, when used to express an affected, not  
 a real, passion, which was the Queen's case.

Pope

Pope has several similes of the same stamp. I shall transcribe one or two from the *Essay on Man*, the gravest and most instructive of all his performances.

And hence one master-passion in the breast,  
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

*Epist. 2. l. 131.*

And again, talking of this same ruling or master passion.

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurse;  
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;  
Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r;  
As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour.

*Ibid. l. 145.*

Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of historians :

Where their sincerity as to fact is doubtful, we strike out truth by the confrontation of different accounts; as we strike out sparks of fire by the collision of flints and steel.

Let us vary the phrase a very little, and there will not remain a shadow of resemblance. Thus, for example :

We discover truth by the confrontation of different



ent accounts ; as we strike out sparks of fire by the collision of flints and steel.

Racine makes Pyrrhus say to Andromaque,

Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets consumé,  
Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai,  
Helas ! fus-je jamais si cruel que vous l'êtes ?

And Orestes, in the same strain :

Que les Scythes sont moins cruels qu' Hermione.

Similes of this kind put one in mind of  
a ludicrous French song :

Je croyois Janneton  
Aussi douce que belle :  
Je croyois Janneton  
Plus douce qu'un mouton ;  
Helas ! hélas !  
Elle est cent fois, mille fois, plus cruelle  
Que n'est le tigre aux bois.

Again,

Helas ! l'amour m'a pris,  
Comme le chat fait la souris.

A vulgar Irish ballad begins thus :

I have as much love in store  
As there's apples in Portmore.

Where the subject is burlesque or ludicrous, such similes are far from being improper. Horace says pleasantly,

Quamquam tu levior cortice.

*L. 3. ode 9.*

And Shakespear,

In breaking oaths he's stronger than Hercules.

And this leads me to observe, that beside the foregoing comparisons, which are all serious, there is a species, the end and purpose of which is to excite gaiety or mirth. Take the following examples.

Falstaff, speaking to his page :

I do here walk before thee, like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 4.*

I think he is not a pick-purse, nor a horse-stealer; but for his verity in love, I do think him as  
concave

concave as a cover'd goblet, or a worm-eaten nut.  
*As you like it, act 3. sc. 10.*

This sword a dagger had his page,  
That was but little for his age;  
And therefore waited on him so  
As dwarfs upon knights-errant do.

*Hudibras, canto 1.*

Description of Hudibras's horse :

He was well stay'd, and in his gait  
Preserv'd a grave, majestic state.  
At spur or switch no more he skipt,  
Or mended pace, than Spaniard whipt:  
And yet so fiery he would bound,  
As if he griev'd to touch the ground :  
That Cæsar's horse, who, as fame goes,  
Had corns upon his feet and toes,  
Was not by half so tender hooft,  
Nor trod upon the ground so soft.  
And as that beast would kneel and stoop,  
(Some write) to take his rider up ;  
So Hudibras his ('tis well known)  
Would often do, to set him down.

*Canto 1.*

Honour is, like a widow, won  
With brisk attempt and putting on,

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With

With entering manfully, and urging;  
Not slow approaches, like a virgin.

*Canto 1.*

The sun had long since in the lap  
Of Thetis taken out his nap;  
And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn  
From black to red began to turn.

*Part 2. canto 2.*

Books, like men, their authors, have but one  
way of coming into the world ; but there are ten  
thousand to go out of it, and return no more.

*Tale of a Tub.*

And in this the world may perceive the difference  
between the integrity of a generous author,  
and that of a common friend. The latter is observed  
to adhere close in prosperity, but on the decline of  
fortune, to drop suddenly off: whereas the generous  
author, just on the contrary, finds his hero on the  
dunghill, from thence by gradual steps raises him to  
a throne, and then immediately withdraws, expecting  
not so much as thanks for his pains.

*Tale of a Tub.*

The most accomplish'd way of using books at  
present is, to serve them as some do lords, learn  
their

their titles, and then brag of their acquaintance.

*Tale of a Tub.*

Box'd in a chair, the beau impatient sits,  
While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits;  
And ever and anon with frightful din  
The leather sounds; he trembles from within.  
So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,  
Pregnant with Greeks, impatient to be freed,  
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,  
Instead of paying chairmen, run them through),  
Laocoon struck the outside with his spear,  
And each imprison'd hero quak'd for fear.

*Description of a city shower. Swift.*

Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,  
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.  
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,  
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,  
With like confusion different nations fly,  
Of various habit, and of various dye,  
The pierc'd battalions disunited, fall  
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.

*Rape of the Lock, canto 3.*

He does not consider, that sincerity in love is  
as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; no body  
takes it now.

*Careless Husband.*

*Lady Eafy.* My dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.

*Sir Charles.* O! Not at all. You shall fee, I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea.

*Ibid.*

C H A P.

## C H A P. XX.

## F I G U R E S.

**T**HE reader must not expect to find here a complete list of the different tropes and figures that have been carefully noted by ancient critics and grammarians. Tropes and figures have indeed been multiplied with so little reserve, as to make it no easy matter to distinguish them from plain language. A discovery almost accidental, made me think of giving them a place in this work : I found that the most important of them depend on principles formerly explained ; and I was glad of an opportunity to show the extensive influence of these principles. Confining myself therefore to figures that answer this purpose, I am luckily freed from much trash ; without dropping, so far as I remember, any figure that merits a proper name.

name. And I begin with Prosopopœia or personification, which is justly intitled to the first place.

## S E C T. I.

### P E R S O N I F I C A T I O N.

**T**His figure, which gives life to things inanimate, is so bold a delusion as to require, one should imagine, very peculiar circumstances for operating the effect. And yet, in the language of poetry, we find variety of expressions, which, though commonly reduced to this figure, are used without ceremony or any sort of preparation. I give, for example, the following expressions. *Thirsty* ground, *hungry* church-yard, *furiously* dart, *angry* ocean. The epithets here, in their proper meaning, are attributes of sensible beings. What is the effect of such epithets, when apply'd to things inanimate? Do they raise in the mind of the reader a perception of sensibility? Do they make



make him conceive the ground, the church-yard, the dart, the ocean, to be endued with animal functions? This is a curious inquiry; and whether so or not, it cannot be declined in handling the present subject.

One thing is certain, that the mind is prone to bestow sensibility upon things inanimate, where that violent effect is necessary to gratify passion. This is one instance, among many, of the power of passion to adjust our opinions and belief to its gratification\*. I give the following examples. Antony, mourning over the body of Cæsar, murdered in the senate-house, vents his passion in the following words.

*Antony.* O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of  
earth,

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.

Thou art the ruins of the noblest man

That ever lived in the tide of times.

*Julius Cæsar, act 3. sc. 4.*

Here Antony must have been impressed with some sort of notion, that the body of

\* Chap. 2. part 5.

Cæsar was listening to him, without which the speech would be foolish and absurd. Nor will it appear strange, after what is said in the chapter above cited, that passion should have such power over the mind of man. Another example of the same kind is, where the earth, as a common mother, is animated to give refuge against a father's unkindness.

*Almeria.* O Earth, behold, I kneel upon thy  
bosom,  
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon  
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield;  
Open thy bowels of compassion, take  
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn  
Of all thy race. Hear me thou, common parent;  
—— I have no parent else.—— Be thou a mother,  
And step between me and the curse of him,  
Who was —who was, but is no more a father;  
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes;  
And for the tender names of *child* and *daughter*,  
Now calls me *murderer* and *parricide*.

*Mourning Bride, act. 4, sc. 7.*

Plaintive passions are extremely solicitous for vent. A soliloquy commonly answers the  
the

the purpose. But when a passion swells high, it is not satisfied with so slight a gratification : it must have a person to complain to ; and if none be found, it will animate things devoid of sense. Thus Philoctetes complains to the rocks and promontories of the isle of Lemnos \* ; and Alcestes dying, invokes the sun, the light of day, the clouds, the earth, her husband's palace, &c. †. Plaintive passions carry the mind still farther. Among the many principles that connect individuals in society, one is remarkable : it is that principle which makes us earnestly wish, that others should enter into our concerns and think and feel as we do ‡. This social principle, when inflamed by a plaintive passion, will, for want of a more complete gratification, prompt the mind to give life even to things inanimate. Moschus, lamenting the death of Bion, conceives that the birds, the fountains, the trees, lament with him. The shepherd,

\* Philoctetes of Sophocles, act 4. sc. 2,

† Alcestes of Euripides, act 2. sc. 1.

‡ See this principle accounted for, chap. 25.

who in Virgil bewails the death of Daphnis, expresseth himself thus :

Daphni, tuum Pœnos etiam ingemuisse leones  
Interitum, montesque feri sylvæque loquuntur.

*Eclogue v. 27.*

Again,

Illum etiam lauri, illum etiam flere myricæ.  
Pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe jacentem  
Mænalus, et gelidi fleverunt fœxa Lycæi.

*Eclogue x. 13.*

Again,

Ho visto al pianto mio  
Responder per pietate i sassi e l' onde ;  
E sospirar le fronde  
Ho visto al pianto mio.  
Ma non ho visto mai,  
Ne spero di vedere  
Compassion ne la crudele, e bella.

*Aminta di Tasso, act 1. sc. 2.*

Earl Rivers carried to execution, says,

O Pomfret, Pomfret ! O thou bloody prison,  
Fatal and ominous to Noble peers !  
Within the guilty closure of thy walls  
Richard the Second, here, was hack'd to death ;  
And,

And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,  
We give to thee our guiltless blood to drink.

*Richard III. act 3. sc. 4.*

King Richard having got intelligence of  
Bolingbroke's invasion, says, upon his  
landing in England from his Irish expedi-  
tion, in a mixture of joy and resentment,

---

I weep for joy  
To stand upon my kingdom once again.  
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
Though rebels wound thee with their horses hoofs.  
As a long parted mother with her child  
Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meet-  
ing;

So weeping, smiling, greet I thee my earth,  
And do thee favour with my royal hands.  
Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,  
Nor with thy sweets comfort his rav'nous sense:  
But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom,  
And heavy-gaited toads, lie in their way ;  
Doing annoyance to the treach'rous feet,  
Which with usurping steps do trample thee.  
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies ;  
And, when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,  
Guard it, I pr'ythee, with a lurking adder ;  
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch

Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.  
 Mock not my senseless conjuration, Lords:  
 This earth shall have a feeling; and these stones  
 Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king  
 Shall falter under foul rebellious arms.

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 2.*

Among the ancients, it was customary after a long voyage to salute the natal soil. A long voyage, was of old a greater enterprise than at present: the safe return to one's country after much fatigue and danger, was a circumstance extremely delightful; and it was natural to give the natal soil a temporary life, in order to sympathise with the traveller. See an example, *Agamemnon* of *Æschilus*, act 3. in the beginning. Regret for leaving a place one has been accustomed to, has the same effect\*.

Terror produceth the same effect. A man, to gratify this passion, extends it to every thing around, even to things inanimate:

Speaking of Polyphemus,

Clamorem immensum tollit, quo pontus et omnes

\* *Philoctetes* of *Sophocles*, at the close.

**Intremuere**

Intremuere undæ penitusque exterrita tellus  
 Italiæ.

*Æneid. iii. 672.*

————— As when old Ocean roars,  
 And heaves huge surges to the *trembling* shores.

*Iliad ii. 249.*

And thund'ring footsteps *shake* the sounding shore,  
*Iliad ii. 549.*

Then with a voice that *shook* the vaulted skies.

*Iliad v. 431.*

Racine, in the tragedy of *Phædra*, describing the sea-monster that destroy'd Hippolitus, conceives the sea itself to be inspired with terror as well as the spectators; or more accurately transfers from the spectators their terror to the sea, with which they were connected :

Le flot qui l'apporta recule epouvanté.

A man also naturally communicates his joy to all objects around, animate or inanimate :

————— As when to them who sail  
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
 Mozambic,

Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
 Sabean odour from the spicy shore  
 Of Araby the Blest; with such delay  
 Well pleas'd, they slack their course, and many a  
 league  
 Chear'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.

*Paradise Lost, b. 4.*

I have been profuse of examples, to show what power many passions have to animate their objects. In all the foregoing examples, the personification, if I mistake not, is so complete as to be derived from an actual conviction, momentary indeed, of life and intelligence. But it is evident from numberless instances, that personification is not always so complete. Personification is a common figure in descriptive poetry, understood to be the language of the writer, and not of any of his personages in a fit of passion. In this case, it seldom or never comes up to a conviction, even momentary, of life and intelligence. I give the following examples.

First in *his* east the glorious lamp was seen,  
 Regent of day, and all th' horizon round

Invested



Invested with bright rays; jocund to run  
*His* longitude through heav'n's high road: the  
 gray

Dawn, and the Pleiades before *him* danc'd,  
 Shedding sweet influence. Lefs bright the moon  
 But opposite, in levell'd west was set.

*His* mirror, with full face borrowing *her* light  
 From *him*; for other light *she* needed none.

*Paradise Lost, b. 7. l. 370. \**

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.

*Romeo and Juliet, act 3. sc. 7.*

But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 1.*

It may, I presume, be taken for granted,  
 that, in the foregoing instances, the perso-  
 nification, either with the poet or his read-  
 er, amounts not to a conviction of intelli-  
 gence; nor that the sun, the moon, the

\* The chastity of the English language, which in common  
 usage distinguishes by genders no words but what signify be-  
 ings male and female, gives thus a fine opportunity for the  
 prosopopœia; a beauty unknown in other languages, where  
 every word is masculine or feminine.

day,

day, the morn, are here understood to be sensible beings. What then is the nature of this personification? Upon considering the matter attentively, I discover that this species of personification must be referred to the imagination. The inanimate object is imagined to be a sensible being, but without any conviction, even for a moment, that it really is so. Ideas or fictions of imagination have power to raise emotions in the mind \*; and when any thing inanimate is, in imagination, supposed to be a sensible being, it makes by that means a greater figure than when an idea is formed of it according to truth. The elevation however in this case, is far from being so great as when the personification arises to an actual conviction; and therefore must be considered as of a lower or inferior sort. Thus personification is of two kinds. The first or nobler, may be termed *passionate personification*: the other, or more humble, *descriptive personification*; because seldom or

\* See appendix, containing definitions and explanation of terms.

never is personification in a description carried the length of conviction.

The imagination is so lively and active, that its images are raised with very little effort; and this justifies the frequent use of descriptive personification. This figure abounds in Milton's *Allegro* and *Penseroso*.

Abstract and general terms, as well as particular objects, are often necessary in poetry. Such terms however are not well adapted to poetry, because they suggest not any image to the mind: I can readily form an image of Alexander or Achilles in wrath; but I cannot form an image of wrath in the abstract, or of wrath independent of a person. Upon that account, in works addressed to the imagination, abstract terms are frequently personified. But this personification never goes farther than the imagination.

Sed mihi vel Tellus optem prius ima dehiscat;  
Vel pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,  
Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam,  
Ante pudor quam te violo, aut tua jura resolvo.

*Æneid.* 4. l. 24.

Thus, to explain the effects of slander, it is imagined to be a voluntary agent :

————— No, 'tis Slander;  
 Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose  
 tongue  
 Out-venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath  
 Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie  
 All corners of the world, kings, queens, and  
 states,  
 Maids, matrons : nay, the secrets of the grave  
 This viperous Slander enters.

*Shakeſpear, Cymbeline, act 3. ſc. 4.*

As alſo human paſſions. Take the following example,

————— For Pleaſure and Revenge  
 Have ears more deaf than adders, to the voice  
 Of any true deciſion.

*Troilus and Creſſida, act 2. ſc. 4.*

Virgil explains fame and its effects by a ſtill greater variety of action \*. And Shakeſpear perſonifies death and its operations in a manner extremely fanciful :

*Æneid, iv. 143.*

———— Within

Within the hollow crown  
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king,  
 Keeps Death his court ; and there the antic sits,  
 Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;  
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene  
 To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks ;  
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,  
 As if his flesh, which walls about our life,  
 Were brass impregnable ; and humour'd thus,  
 Comes at the last, and with a little pin  
 Bores through his castle-walls, and farewell king !

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 4.*

Not less successfully is life and action given  
 even to sleep :

*K. Henry.* How many thousands of my poorest  
 subjects

Are at this hour asleep ! O gentle Sleep,  
 Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
 That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,  
 And steep my senses in forgetfulness ?  
 Why rather, Sleep, ly'st thou in smoky cribs,  
 Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,  
 And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slum-  
 ber ;

Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,  
 Under the canopies of costly state,

And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?  
 O thou dull god, why ly'st thou with the vile  
 In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch,  
 A watch-case to a common larum-bell?  
 Wilt thou, upon the high and giddy mast,  
 Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
 In cradle of the rude imperious surge;  
 And in the visitation of the winds,  
 Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
 Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
 With deaf'ning clamours in the slipp'ry shrouds,  
 That, with the hurly, Death itself awakes:  
 Can'st thou, O partial Sleep, give thy repose  
 To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;  
 And, in the calmest and the stillest night,  
 With all appliances and means to boot,  
 Deny it to a king? Then, happy low! lie down;  
 Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 3. sc. 1.*

I shall add one example more, to show  
 that descriptive personification may be used  
 with propriety, even where the purpose of  
 the discourse is instruction merely:

Oh! let the steps of youth be cautious,  
 How they advance into a dangerous world;  
 Our duty only can conduct us safe:

Our

Our passions are seducers : but of all,  
 The strongest Love : he first approaches us,  
 In childish play, wantoning in our walks :  
 If heedlessly we wander after him,  
 As he will pick out all the dancing way,  
 We're lost, and hardly to return again.  
 We should take warning : he is painted blind,  
 To show us, if we fondly follow him,  
 The precipices we may fall into.  
 Therefore let Virtue take him by the hand :  
 Directed so, he leads to certain joy.

*Southern.*

Hitherto our progress has been upon firm ground. Whether we shall be so lucky in the remaining part of the journey, seems doubtful. For after acquiring some knowledge of the subject, when we now look back to the expressions mentioned in the beginning, *thirsty* ground, *furious* dart, and such like, it seems as difficult as at first to say what sort of personification it is. Such expressions evidently raise not the slightest conviction of sensibility. Nor do I think they amount to descriptive personification : in the expressions mentioned, we do not so much as figure the ground or the  
 dart

dart to be animated ; and if so, they cannot at all come under the present subject. And to show this more clearly, I shall endeavour to explain what effect such expressions have naturally upon the mind. In the expression *angry ocean*, for example, do we not tacitly compare the ocean in a storm, to a man in wrath ? It is by this tacit comparison, that the expression acquires a force or elevation, beyond what is found when an epithet is used proper to the object : for I have had occasion to show \*, that a thing inanimate acquires a certain elevation by being compared to a sensible being. And this very comparison is itself a demonstration, that there is no personification in such expressions. For, by the very nature of a comparison, the things compared are kept distinct, and the native appearance of each is preserved. It will be shown afterward, that expressions of this kind belong to another figure, which I term a *figure of speech*, and which employs the seventh section of the present chapter.

\* Chap. 19.

Though



Though thus in general we can precisely distinguish descriptive personification from what is merely a figure of speech, it is however often difficult to say, with respect to some expressions, whether they are of the one kind or of the other. Take the following instances.

The moon shines bright : in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently *kiss* the trees,  
And they did make no noise ; in such a night,  
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan wall,  
And sigh'd his soul towards the Grecian tents  
Where Cressid lay that night.

*Merchant of Venice, act 5. sc. 1.*

---

I have seen  
Th' *ambitious* ocean swell, and rage, and foam,  
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds.

*Julius Caesar, act 1. sc. 6.*

*Jane Shore.* My form, alas ! has long forgot to  
    please;  
The scene of beauty and delight is chang'd,  
No roses bloom upon my fading cheek,  
No laughing graces wanton in my eyes ;  
But haggard Grief, lean-looking fallow Care,  
And

And pining Discontent, a rueful train,  
Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn.

*Jane Shore, act 1. sc. 2.*

With respect to these and numberless other instances of the same kind, whether they be examples of personification or of a figure of speech merely, seems to be an arbitrary question. They will be ranged under the former class by those only who are endued with a sprightly imagination. Nor will the judgement even of the same person be steady : it will vary with the present state of the spirits, lively or composed.

Having thus at large explained the present figure, its different kinds, and the principles from whence derived ; what comes next in order is to ascertain its proper province, by showing in what cases it is suitable, in what unsuitable. I begin with observing, upon passionate personification, that this figure is not promoted by every passion indifferently. All dispiriting passions are averse to it. Remorse, in particular, is too serious and severe, to be gratified by

a phantom of the mind. I cannot therefore approve the following speech of Enobarbus, who had deserted his master Antony.

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,  
When men revolted shall upon record  
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did  
Before thy face repent —————  
Oh sovereign mistress of true melancholy,  
The poisonous damp of night dispunge upon me,  
That life, a very rebel to my will,  
May hang no longer on me.

*Antony and Cleopatra, act 4. sc. 7.*

If this can be justified, it must be upon the Heathen system of theology, which converted into deities the sun, moon, and stars.

Secondly, After a passionate personification is properly introduced, it ought to be confined strictly to its proper province, that of gratifying the passion; and no sentiment nor action ought to be exerted by the animated object, but what answers that purpose. Personification is at any rate a bold figure, and ought to be employed with great reserve. The passion of love, for ex-

ample, in a plaintive tone, may give a momentary life to woods and rocks, that the lover may vent his distress to them : but no passion will support a conviction so far stretched, as that these woods and rocks should be living witnesses to report the distress to others :

Ch'i' t'amì piu de la mia vita,  
 Se tu nol fai, crudele,  
 Chiedilo à queste selve,  
 Che te'l diranno, et te'l diran con esse  
 Le fere loro e i duri sterpi, e i sassi  
 Di questi alpestri monti,  
 Ch'i' ho sì spesse volte  
 Inteneriti al suon de' miei lamenti.

*Pastor fido, att 3. sc. 3.*

No lover who is not crazed will utter such a sentiment : it is plainly the operation of the writer, indulging his imagination without regard to nature. The same observation is applicable to the following passage.

In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
 With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales  
 Of woful ages, long ago betid:

And

And ere thou bid goodnight, to quiet their grief,  
Tell them the lamentable fall of me,  
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.  
For why! the senseless brands will sympathise  
The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,  
And in compassion weep the fire out.

*Richard II. act 5. sc. 1.*

One must read this passage very seriously to avoid laughing. The following passage is quite extravagant: the different parts of the human body are too intimately connected with self, to be personified by the power of any passion; and after converting such a part into a sensible being, it is still worse to make it be conceived as rising in rebellion against self.

*Cleopatra.* Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the  
serpent's fury.

Coward flesh —————

Would'st thou conspire with Cæsar, to betray me,  
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to't.

*Dryden, All for Love, act 5.*

Next comes descriptive personification; upon which I must observe in general, that

it ought to be cautiously used. A personage in a tragedy, agitated by a strong passion, deals in strong sentiments; and the reader, catching fire by sympathy, relishes the boldest personifications. But a writer, even in the most lively description, ought to take a lower flight, and content himself with such easy personifications as agree with the tone of mind inspired by the description. In plain narrative, again, the mind, serious and sedate, rejects personification altogether. Strada, in his history of the Belgic wars, has the following passage, which, by a strained elevation above the tone of the subject, deviates into burlesk. “ Vix descendat a prætoris navi Cæsar; cum  
 “ fœda illico exorta in portu tempestas,  
 “ classem impetu disjecit, prætoriam haufit: quasi non vecturam amplius Cæsarem, Cæsarisque fortunam \*.” Neither do I approve, in Shakespear, the speech of King John, gravely exhorting the citizens of Angiers to a surrender; though a tragic writer has much greater latitude than a hi-

\* Dec. 1. 1. 1.

storian. Take the following specimen of this speech.

The cannons have their bowels full of wrath ;  
And ready mounted are they to spit forth  
Their iron-indignation 'gainst your walls.

*Æt 2. sc. 3.*

Secondly, If extraordinary marks of respect put upon a person of the lowest rank be ridiculous, not less so is the personification of a mean object. This rule chiefly regards descriptive personification : for an object can hardly be mean that is the cause of a violent passion ; in that circumstance, at least, it must be an object of importance. With respect to this point, it would be in vain to set limits to personification : taste is the only rule. A poet of superior genius hath more than others the command of this figure ; because he hath more than others the power of inflaming the mind. Homer appears not extravagant in animating his darts and arrows : nor Thomson in animating the seasons, the winds, the rains, the dews. He even ventures to animate the diamond, and doth it with propriety.

— That

————— That polish'd bright  
And all its native lustre let abroad,  
Dares, as it sparkles on the fair-one's breast,  
With vain ambition emulate her eyes.

But there are things familiar and base, to  
which personification cannot descend. In a  
composed state of mind, to animate a lump  
of matter even in the most rapid flight of  
fancy, degenerates into burlesk.

How now? What noise? that spirit's possess'd with  
haste,  
That wounds th' unresisting postern with these  
strokes.

*Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, act 4, sc. 6.*

The following little better :

————— Or from the shore  
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath;  
And sing their wild notes to the list'ning waste.

*Thomson, Spring, l. 23.*

Speaking of a man's hand cut off in battle :

Te decisa suum. Laride, dextera quaerit :  
Semianimesque micant digiti; ferrumque retrah-  
tant.

*Æneid. x. 395.*

The



The personification here of a hand is insufferable, especially in a plain narration; not to mention that such a trivial incident is too minutely described.

The same observation is applicable to abstract terms, which ought not to be animated unless they have some natural dignity. Thomson, in this article, is quite licentious. Witness the following instances out of many.

O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!  
On which *the power of cultivation* lies,  
And joys to see the wonders of his toil.

*Summer, l. 1423.*

Then fated *Hunger* bids his brother *Thirst*  
Produce the mighty bowl:  
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn  
Mature and perfect, from *his* dark retreat  
Of thirty years; and now *his bonest front*  
Flames in the light refulgent.

*Autumn, l. 516.*

Thirdly, it is not sufficient to avoid improper subjects. Some preparation is necessary, in order to rouse the mind. The imagination

imagination refuses its aid, till it be warmed at least, if not inflamed. Yet Thomson, without the least ceremony or preparation, introduceth each season as a sensible being :

From brightening fields of æther fair disclos'd,  
Child of the sun, refulgent Summer comes,  
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth;  
He comes attended by the sultry hours,  
And ever-fanning breezes, on his way,  
While from his ardent look, the turning Spring  
Averts her blushing face, and earth and skies  
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.

*Summer, l. 1.*

See *Winter* comes, to rule the vary'd year,  
Sullen and sad with all his rising train,  
*Vapours, and clouds, and storms.*

*Winter, l. 1.*

This has violently the air of writing mechanically without taste. It is not natural, that the imagination of a writer should be so much heated at the very commencement; and, at any rate, he cannot expect such ductility in his readers: but if this practice can be justified by authority,  
Thomson

Thomson has one of no mean note: Vida begins his first eclogue in the following words.

Dicite, vos Musæ, et juvenum memorate querelas;  
Dicite; nam motas ipsas, ad carmina cautes  
Et requiescē subhibent vaga flumina cursus.

Even Shakespear is not always careful to prepare the mind for this bold figure. Take the following instance:

---

Upon these taxations,  
The clothiers all, not able to maintain  
The many to them 'longing, have put off  
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers; who,  
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger  
And lack of other means, in desp'rate manner  
Daring th' event to th' teeth, are all in uproar,  
And *Danger* serves among them.

*Henry VIII. act 1. sc. 4.*

Fourthly, Descriptive personification ought never to be carried farther than barely to animate the subject: and yet poets are not easily restrained from making this phantom of their own creating behave and act in every respect as if it were really a sensible  
VOL. III. L being.

being. By such licence we lose sight of the subject; and the description is rendered obscure or unintelligible, instead of being more lively and striking. In this view, the following passage, describing Cleopatra on shipboard, appears to me exceptionable.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burnt on the water; the poop was beaten gold,  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick with 'em.

*Antony and Cleopatra, act 2. sc. 3.*

Let the winds be personified; I make no objection. But to make them love-sick, is too far stretched; having no resemblance to any natural action of wind. In another passage, where Cleopatra is also the subject, the personification of the air is carried beyond all bounds:

---

The city cast  
Its people out upon her; and Antony  
Inthron'd i' th' market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to th' air, which but for vacancy,  
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
And made a gap in nature.

*Antony and Cleopatra, act 2. sc. 3.*

The

The following personification of the earth or soil is not less wild.

She shall be dignify'd with this high honour  
To bear my Lady's train; lest the base earth  
Should from her vesture change to steal a kiss;  
And of so great a favour growing proud,  
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,  
And make rough winter everlastingly.

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 2. sc. 7.*

Shakespear, far from approving such intemperance of imagination, puts this speech in the mouth of a ranting lover. Neither can I relish what follows.

Omnia quæ, Phœbo quondam meditante, beatus  
Audim Eurotas, jussuque ediscere lauros,  
Ille canit.

*Virgil, Buc. vi. 82.*

The chearfulness singly of a pastoral song, will scarce support personification in the lowest degree. But admitting, that a river gently flowing may be imagined a sensible being listening to a song, I cannot enter into the conceit of the river's ordering his laurels to learn the song. Here all resem-

blance to any thing real is quite lost. This however is copied literally by one of our greatest poets ; early indeed, before maturity of taste or judgement.

Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along,  
And bade his willows learn the moving song.

*Pope's Pastorals, past. 4. l. 13.*

This author, in riper years, is guilty of a much greater deviation from the rule. Dullness may be imagined a deity or idol, to be worshipped by bad writers : but then some sort of disguise is requisite, some bastard virtue must be bestowed, to give this idol a plausible appearance. Yet in the *Dunciad*, dullness, without the least disguise, is made the object of worship. The mind rejects such a fiction as unnatural ; for dullness is a defect, of which even the dullest mortal is ashamed :

Then he : great tamer of all human art, &c.

*Book i. 163.*

The following instance is stretched beyond all resemblance. It is bold to take a part

or member of a living creature, and to bestow upon it life, volition, and action: after animating two such members, it is still bolder to make them envy each other; for this is wide of any resemblance to reality:

---

De nostri baci

Meritamente sia giudice quella, &c.

*Pastor Fido, act 2, sc. 1.*

Fifthly, The enthusiasm of passion may have the effect to prolong passionate personification: but descriptive personification cannot be dispatched in too few words. A minute description dissolves the charm, and makes the attempt to personify appear ridiculous. Homer succeeds in animating his darts and arrows: but such personification spun out in a French translation, is mere burlesk:

Et la flèche en furie, avide de son sang,  
Part, vole à lui, l'atteint, et lui perce le flanc.

Horace says happily, "Post equitem sedet  
" atra Cura." See how this thought degenerates

nerates by being divided, like the former, into a number of minute parts :

Un fou rempli d'erreurs, que le trouble accompagne  
Et malade à la ville ainsi qu'à la campagne,  
En vain monte à cheval pour tromper son ennui,  
Le Chagrin monte en croupe et galope avec lui.

The following passage is, if possible, still more faulty.

Her fate is whisper'd by the gentle breeze,  
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees;  
The trembling trees, in ev'ry plain and wood,  
Her fate remurmur to the silver flood;  
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears  
Swell'd with new passion, and o'erflows with tears;  
The winds, and trees, and floods, her death deplore,  
Daphne, our grief! our glory! now no more.

*Pope's Pastorals, iv. 61.*

Let grief or love have the power to animate the winds, the trees, the floods, provided the figure be dispatched in a single expression. Even in that case, the figure seldom has a good effect; because grief or love of the pastoral kind, are causes rather too faint for so violent an effect as imagining the winds, trees,



tures, or floods, to be sensible beings. But when this figure is deliberately spread out with great regularity and accuracy through many lines, the reader, instead of relishing it, is struck with its ridiculous appearance.

## S E C T. II.

## A P O S T R O P H E.

**T**HIS figure and the former are derived from the same principle. If, to gratify a plaintive passion, we can bestow a momentary sensibility upon an inanimate object, it is not more difficult to bestow a momentary presence upon a sensible being who is absent.

Hinc Drepani me portus et illætabilis ora  
Accipit. Hic, pelagi tot tempestatibus actus,  
Heu! genitorem, omnis curæ casusque levamen,  
Amitto Anchisen: *hic me pater optime fessum*  
*Deferis*, heu! tantis nequicquam erepte periclis.  
Nec vates Helenus, cum multa horrenda moneret,  
Hos mihi prædixit luctus; non dira Celæno.

*Æneid. iii. 707.*

This

This figure is sometimes joined with the former: things inanimate, to qualify them for listening to a passionate expostulation; are not only personified, but also conceived to be present.

Et, si fata Deûm, si mens non læva fuisset,  
Impulerat ferro Argolicas fœdare latebras:  
*Trojaque nunc stare, Priamique arx alta maneres.*

*Æneid. ii. 54.*

*Helena.* ————— Poor Lord, is't I  
That chase thee from thy country, and expose  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of non-sparing war? And is it I  
That drive thee from the sportive court, where  
thou

Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,  
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
Fly with false aim; pierce the still moving air,  
That sings with piercing; do not touch my Lord.

*All's well that ends well, act 3. sc. 4.*

This figure, like all others, requires an agitation of mind. In plain narrative, as, for example, in giving the genealogy of a family, it has no good effect:

———— Fauno

~~Te, Saturne, refert; tu sanguinis ultimus auctor.~~  
*Æneid. vii. 48.*

## S E C T. III.

## H Y P E R B O L E.

**I**N this figure we have another effect of the foregoing principle. An object uncommon with respect to size, either very great of its kind or very little, strikes us with surprise; and this emotion, like all others, prone to gratification, forces upon the mind a momentary conviction that the object is greater or less than it is in reality. The same effect, precisely, attends figurative grandeur or littleness. Every object that produceth surprise by its singularity, is always seen in a false light while the emotion subsists: circumstances are exaggerated beyond truth; and it is not till after the emotion subsides, that things appear as they are. A writer, taking advantage of this

natural delusion, enriches his description greatly by the hyperbole. And the reader, even in his coolest moments, relishes this figure, being sensible that it is the operation of nature upon a warm fancy.

It will be observed, that a writer is generally more successful in magnifying by a hyperbole than in diminishing : a minute object contracts the mind, and fetters its power of conception ; but the mind, dilated and inflamed with a grand object, moulds objects for its gratification with great facility. Longinus, with respect to the diminishing power of a hyperbole, cites the following ludicrous thought from a comic poet. “ He was owner of a bit of ground “ not larger than a Lacedemonian letter.\*” But, for the reason now given, the hyperbole has by far the greater force in magnifying objects ; of which take the following specimen.

For all the land which thou see'st, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a

\* Chap. 31. of his treatise on the sublime.

man can number the dust of the earth, then shall  
thy seed also be numbered.

*Genesis* xiii. 15. 16.

Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret  
Gramina: nec teneras curfu læsisset aristas.

*Æneid.* vii. 808.

————— Atque imo barathri ter gurgite vastos  
Sorbet in abruptum fluctus, rursusque sub auras  
Erigit alternos, et sidera verberat undâ.

*Æneid.* iii. 421.

————— Horrificis juxta tonat *Ætna* ruinis,  
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,  
Turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla:  
Attollitque globos flammaram, et sidera lambit.

*Æneid.* iii. 571.

Speaking of Polyphemus,

————— Ipse arduus, altaque pulsat  
Sidera.

*Æneid.* iii. 619.

————— When he speaks,  
The air, a charter'd libertine, is still.

*Henry V.* act 1. sc. 1.

Now shield with shield, with helmet-helmet clos'd,  
 To armour armour, lance to lance oppos'd,  
 Host against host with shadowy squadrons drew,  
 The sounding darts in iron tempests flew,  
 Victors and vanquish'd join promiscuous cries,  
 And shrilling shouts and dying groans arise;  
 With streaming blood the slipp'ry fields are dy'd,  
 And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.

*Iliad* iv. 508.

The following may also pass, though stretched pretty far.

Econjungendo à temerario ardire  
 Estrema forza, e infaticabil lena  
 Vien che si' impetuoso il ferro gire,  
 Che ne trema la terra, e'l ciel balena.

*Gierusalem, cant.* 6. st. 46.

Quintilian \* is sensible that this figure is natural. "For," says he, "not content-  
 "ed with truth, we naturally incline to  
 "augment or diminish beyond it; and for  
 "that reason the hyperbole is familiar even  
 "among the vulgar and illiterate." And he adds, very justly, "That the hyperbole  
 "is then proper, when the subject of itself

\* L. 8. cap. 6. in fin.

" exceeds

“ exceeds the common measure.” From these premisses, one would not expect the following conclusion, the only reason he can find for justifying this figure of speech.

“ *Conceditur enim amplius dicere, quia dici quantum est, non potest: meliusque ultra quam citra stat oratio.*” (We are indulged to say more than enough, because we cannot say enough; and it is better to be over than under). In the name of wonder, why this slight and childish reason, when immediately before he had made it evident, that the hyperbole is founded on human nature? I could not resist this personal stroke of criticism, intended not against our author, for no human creature is exempt from error; but against the blind veneration that is paid to the ancient classic writers, without distinguishing their blemishes from their beauties.

Having examined the nature of this figure, and the principle on which it is erected; I proceed, as in the first section, to some rules by which it ought to be governed. And in the first place, it is a capital fault to introduce an hyperbole in the description

scription of an ordinary object or event which creates no surprise. In such a case, the hyperbole is altogether unnatural, being destitute of surprise, the only foundation that can support it. Take the following instance, where the subject is extremely familiar, *viz.* swimming to gain the shore after a shipwreck.

I saw him beat the surges under him,  
And ride upon their backs ; he trode the water ;  
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
The surge most swollen that met him : his bold head  
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd  
Himself with his good arms, in lusty strokes  
To th' shore, that o'er his wave-born basis bow'd,  
As stooping to relieve him.

*Tempest, act 2. sc. 1.*

In the next place, it may be gathered from what is said, that an hyperbole can never suit the tone of any dispiriting passion. Sorrow in particular will never prompt such a figure; and for that reason the following hyperboles must be condemned as unnatural.

*K. Rich.*



*K. Rich.* Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!

We'll make foul weather with despised tears;  
Our sighs, and they, shall lodge the summer-corn;  
And make a dearth in this revolting land.

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 6.*

Draw them to Tyber's bank, and weep your tears  
Into the channel, till the lowest stream  
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

*Julius Cæsar, act 1. sc. 1.*

Thirdly, a writer, if he wish to succeed, ought always to have the reader in his eye. He ought in particular never to venture a bold thought or expression, till the reader be warmed and prepared for it. For this reason, an hyperbole in the beginning of any work can never be in its place. Example :

*Jam pauca aratro jugera regie  
Moles relinquent.*

*Horat. Carm. lib. 2. ode. 15.*

In the fourth place, the nicest point of all, is to ascertain the natural limits of an hyperbole, beyond which being overstrained it  
has

has a bad effect. Longinus, in the abovesaid chapter, with great propriety of thought, enters a caveat against an hyperbole of this kind. He compares it to a bowstring, which relaxes by overstraining, and produceth an effect directly opposite to what is intended. I pretend not to ascertain any precise boundary: the attempt would be difficult, if not impracticable. I must therefore be satisfied with an humbler task, which is, to give a specimen of what I reckon overstrained hyperboles; and I shall be also extremely curt upon this subject, because examples are to be found every where. No fault is more common among writers of inferior rank; and instances are found even among those of the finest taste; witness the following hyperbole, too bold even for an Hotspur.

Hotspur talking of Mortimer :

In single opposition hand to hand,  
 He did confound the best part of an hour  
 In changing hardiment with great Glendower.  
 Three times they breath'd, and three times did  
 they drink,

Upon

Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood ;  
Who then affrighted with their bloody looks,  
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,  
And hid his crisp'd head in the hollow bank  
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.

*First Part Henry IV. act 1. sc. 4.*

### Speaking of Henry V.

England ne'er had a King until his time :  
Virtue he had, deserving to command :  
His brandish'd sword did blind men with its beams :  
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings :  
His sparkling eyes, replete with awful fire,  
More dazzled, and drove back his enemies,  
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.  
What should I say ? his deeds exceed all speech :  
He never lifted up his hand, but conquer'd.

*First Part Henry VI. act 1. sc. 1.*

Lastly, an hyperbole after it is introduced with all advantages, ought to be comprehended within the fewest words possible. As it cannot be relished but in the hurry and swelling of the mind, a leisurely view dissolves the charm, and discovers the description to be extravagant at least, and perhaps also ridiculous. This fault is pal-

pable in a fonnet which passeth for one of the most complete in the French language. Phillis is made as far to outshine the sun as he outshines the stars.

Le silence regnoit sur la terre et sur l'onde,  
L'air devenoit serain, &c.

*Collection of French epigrams, vol. 1. p. 66.*

There is in Chaucer a thought expressed in a single line, which sets a young beauty in a more advantageous light, than the whole of this much-laboured poem.

Up rose the sun, and up rose Emelie,

#### S E C T. IV.

*The means or instrument conceived to be the agent.*

**I**N viewing a group of things, we have obviously a natural tendency to bestow all possible perfection upon that particular object which makes the greatest figure. The emotion raised by the object, is, by this

this means, thoroughly gratified ; and if the emotion be lively, it prompts us even to exceed nature in the conception we form of the object. Take the following examples.

For Neleus' sons Alcides' *rage* had slain.

A broken rock the *force* of Pirus threw.

In these instances, the rage of Hercules and the force of Pirus, being the capital circumstances, are so far exalted as to be conceived the agents that produce the effects.

In the following instance, hunger being the chief circumstance in the description, is itself imagined to be the patient.

Whose hunger has not tasted food these three days.

*Jane Shore.*

---

As when the *force*  
Of subterranean wind transports a hill.

*Paradise Lost.*

---

As when the *potent rod*  
Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day  
Wav'd round the coast, upcall'd a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts.

*Paradise Lost.*

## S E C T. V.

*A figure, which, among related objects, extends properties of one to another.*

THIS figure is not dignified with a proper name, because it has been overlooked by all writers. It merits, however, place in this work; and must be distinguished from those formerly handled, as depending on a different principle. *Giddy brink, jovial wine, daring wound*, are examples of this figure. Here are expressions that certainly import not the ordinary relation of an adjective to its substantive. A *brink*, for example, cannot be termed *giddy* in a proper sense: neither can it be termed *giddy* in any figurative sense that can import any of its qualities or attributes. When we attend to the expression, we discover that a *brink* is termed *giddy* from producing that effect in those who stand on it. In the same manner a wound is said to be daring,

NOT

not with respect to itself, but with respect to the boldness of the person who inflicts it : and wine is said to be jovial, as inspiring mirth and jollity. Thus the attributes of one subject, are extended to another with which it is connected ; and such expression must be considered as a figure, because it deviates from ordinary language.

How are we to account for this figure; for we see it lies in the thought, and to what principle shall we refer it? Have poets a privilege to alter the nature of things, and at pleasure to bestow attributes upon subjects to which these attributes do not belong? It is an evident truth, which we have had often occasion to inculcate, that the mind, in idea, passeth easily and sweetly along a train of connected objects ; and, where the objects are intimately connected, that it is disposed to carry along the good or bad properties of one to another ; especially where it is in any degree inflamed with these properties \*. From this principle is derived the figure under consideration.

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 4.

Language,

Language, invented for the communication of thought, would be imperfect, if it were not expressive even of the slightest propensities and more delicate feelings. But language cannot remain so imperfect, among a people who have received any polish ; because language is regulated by internal feeling, and is gradually so improved as to express whatever passes in the mind. Thus, for example, a sword in the hand of a coward, is, in poetical diction, termed a *coward sword* : the expression is significative of an internal operation ; for the mind, in passing from the agent to its instrument, is disposed to extend to the latter the properties of the former. Governed by the same principle, we say *listening* fear, by extending the attribute *listening* of the man who listens, to the passion with which he is moved. In the expression, *bold deed*, or *audax facinus*, we extend to the effect, what properly belongs to the cause. But not to waste time by making a commentary upon every expression of this kind, the best way to give a complete view of the subject, is to exhibit



exhibit a table of the different connections that may give occasion to this figure. And in viewing this table, it will be observed, that the figure can never have any grace but where the connections are of the most intimate kind.

1. An attribute of the cause expressed as an attribute of the effect.

*Audax facinus.*

Of yonder fleet a *bold* discovery make.

An impious mortal gave the *daring* wound,

————— To my *adventurous* song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar.

*Paradise Lost,*

2. An attribute of the effect expressed as an attribute of the cause.

Quos periisse ambos *miseræ* censebam in mari.

*Plautus.*

No wonder, fallen such a *pernicious* height.

*Paradise Lost,*

3. An

3. An effect expressed as an attribute of the cause.

Jovial wine, Giddy brink, Drowsy night, Musing midnight, Panting height, Astonish'd thought, Mournful gloom.

Casting a dim *religious* light.

*Milton, Comus.*

And the *merry* bells ring round,

And the *jocund* rebecks sound.

*Milton, Allegro.*

4. An attribute of a subject bestowed upon one of its parts or members.

Longing arms.

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierc'd the *fearful* hollow of thine ear.

*Romeo and Juliet, act 3. sc. 7.*

——— Oh, lay by  
Those most ungentle looks and angry weapons;  
Unless you mean my griefs and killing fears  
Should stretch me out at your *relentless* feet.

*Fair Penitent, act 3.*

——— And

— And ready now  
To stoop with *wearied* wing, and *willing* feet,  
On the bare outside of this world.

*Paradise Lost, b. 3.*

5. A quality of the agent given to the instrument with which it operates.

Why peep your *coward* swords half out their shells?

6. An attribute of the agent given to the subject upon which it operates.

High-climbing hill.

*Milton,*

7. A quality of one subject given to another.

*Icci, beatiss nunc Arabum invides*

*Gazis.*

*Hora. Carm. l. 1. ode 29.*

When sapless age, and weak unable limbs,  
Should bring thy father to his *drooping* chair.

*Shakespeare,*

By art, the pilot through the boiling deep  
And howling tempest, steers the *fearless* ship.

*Iliad xxiii. 385.*

Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,  
And sunk transported on the *conscious* bed.

*Odys. viii. 337.*

A *stupid* moment motionless she stood,

*Summer, l. 1336.*

8. A circumstance connected with a subject, expressed as a quality of the subject.

Breezy summit.

'Tis ours the chance of fighting fields to try.

*Iliad i. 301.*

Oh! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall.

*Odys. v. 395.*

From this table it appears, that the expressing an effect as an attribute of the cause, is not so agreeable as the opposite expression. The descent from cause to effect is natural and easy: the opposite direction resembles retrograde motion\*. *Panting height*, for example, *astonish'd thought*, are strained and uncouth expressions, which

\* See chap. I.

a writer of taste will avoid. For the same reason, an epithet is unsuitable, which at present is not applicable to the subject, however applicable it may be afterward.

*Submersaque* öbrue puppes.

*Æneid.* i. 73.

And mighty *ruins* fall.

*Iliad* v. 411.

Impious sons their *mangled* fathers wound.

Another rule regards this figure, That the property of one object ought not to be bestowed upon another with which it is incongruous:

*K. Rich.* ——— How dare thy joints forget  
To pay their *awful* duty to our presence.

*Richard II.* act 3. sc. 6.

The connection betwixt an awful superior and his submissive dependent is so intimate, that an attribute may readily be transferred from the one to the other. But awfulness cannot be so transferred, because it is inconsistent with submission.

## S E C T VI.

*Metaphor and Allegory.*

A Metaphor differs from a simile, in form only, not in substance. In a simile the two different subjects are kept distinct in the expression, as well as in the thought: in a metaphor, the two subjects are kept distinct in thought only, not in expression. A hero resembles a lion, and upon that resemblance many similes have been made by Homer and other poets. But instead of resembling a lion, let us take the aid of the imagination, and feign or figure the hero to be a lion. By this variation the simile is converted into a metaphor; which is carried on by describing all the qualities of a lion that resemble those of the hero. The fundamental pleasure here, that of resemblance, belongs to thought as distinguished from expression. There is an additional pleasure which arises from the expression.

The

The poet, by figuring his hero to be a lion, goes on to describe the lion in appearance, but in reality the hero; and his description is peculiarly beautiful, by expressing the virtues and qualities of the hero in new terms, which, properly speaking, belong not to him, but to a different being. This will better be understood by examples. A family connected with a common parent, resembles a tree, the trunk and branches of which are connected with a common root. But let us suppose, that a family is figured not barely to be like a tree, but to be a tree; and then the simile will be converted into a metaphor, in the following manner.

Edward's sev'n sons, whereof thyself art one,  
 Were sev'n fair branches, springing from one root;  
 Some of these branches by the dest'nies cut:  
 But Thomas, my dear Lord, my life, my Glo'-  
     ster,  
 One flourishing branch of his most royal root,  
 Is hack'd down, and his summer-leaves all faded,  
 By Envy's hand and Murder's bloody axe.

*Richard II. act 1. sc. 3.*

Figuring

Figuring human life to be a voyage at sea :

There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat ;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

*Julius Caesar, act 4. sc. 3.*

Figuring glory and honour to be a garland  
of fresh flowers :

*Hotspur.* ————— Would to heav'n,  
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!  
*Pr. Henry.* I'll make it greater, ere I part from  
thee ;  
And all the budding honours on thy crest  
I'll crop, to make a garland for my head.

*First Part Henry IV. act 5. sc. 9.*

Figuring a man who hath acquired great  
reputation and honour to be a tree full of  
fruit :

————— Oh, boys, this story  
The world may read in me : my body's mark'd  
With Roman swords ; and my report was once

*First*



First with the best of note. Cymbeline lov'd me;  
 And when a soldier was the theme, my name  
 Was not far off: then was I as a tree,  
 Whose boughs did bend with fruit. But in one  
 night,  
 A storm or robbery, call it what you will,  
 Shook down my mellow hangings, nay my leaves;  
 And left me bare to weather.

*Cymbeline, act 3. st. 3.*

I am aware that the term *metaphor* has been used in a more extensive sense than I give it; but I thought it of consequence, in matters of some intricacy, to separate things that differ from each other, and to confine words within their most proper sense. An allegory differs from a metaphor; and what I would chuse to call *a figure of speech*, differs from both. I shall proceed to explain these differences. A metaphor is defined above to be an operation of the imagination, figuring one thing to be another. An allegory requires no operation of the imagination, nor is one thing figured to be another: it consists in chusing a subject having properties or circumstances resembling those of  
 the

the principal subject; and the former is described in such a manner as to represent the latter. The subject thus represented is kept out of view; we are left to discover it by reflection; and we are pleased with the discovery, because it is our own work. Quintilian \* gives the following instance of an allegory,

O navis, referent in mare te novi  
Fluctus. O quid agis? fortiter occupa portum.  
*Horat. lib. 1. ode 14.*

and explains it elegantly in the following words: "Totusque ille Horatii locus, quo  
" navim pro republica, fluctuum tempe-  
" states pro bellis civilibus, portum pro pa-  
" ce atque concordia, dicit."

There cannot be a finer or more correct allegory than the following, in which a vineyard is put for God's own people the Jews.

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the

\* 1. 8. cap. 6. sect. 2.

land. The hills were covered with its shadow, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all which pass do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild-beast doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard thy right hand hath planted, and the branch thou madest strong for thyself.

*Psalms 80.*

In a word, an allegory is in every respect similar to an hieroglyphical painting, excepting only, that words are used instead of colours. Their effects are precisely the same. A hieroglyphic raises two images in the mind; one seen, which represents one not seen. An allegory does the same. The representative subject is described; and it is by resemblance that we are enabled to apply the description to the subject represented.

In a figure of speech, neither is there any fiction of the imagination employ'd, nor a representative subject introduced. A figure of speech, as imply'd from

its name, regards the expression only, not the thought; and it may be defined, the employing a word in a sense different from what is proper to it. Thus youth or the beginning of life, is expressed figuratively by *morning of life*. Morning is the beginning of the day; and it is transferred sweetly and easily to signify the beginning of any other series, life especially, the progress of which is reckoned by days.

Figures of speech are reserved for a separate section; but a metaphor and allegory are so much connected, that it is necessary to handle them together: the rules for distinguishing the good from the bad, are common to both. We shall therefore proceed to these rules, after adding some examples to illustrate the nature of an allegory. Horace speaking of his love to Pyrrha, which was now extinguished, expresses himself thus.

———— Me tabulâ facer  
 Votivâ paries indicat uvida  
 Suspendisse potenti  
 Vestimenta maris Deo.

*Carm. l. i. odé 5.*  
 Again,

Again,

Phœbus volentem prælia me loqui,  
 Victas et urbes, increpuit lyrâ :  
 Ne parva Tyrrhenum per æquor  
 Vela darem.

*Carm. l. 4. ode 15.*

*Queen.* Great Lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail  
 their loss,

But chearly seek how to redress their harms.  
 What though the mast be now blown overboard,  
 The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,  
 And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood ?  
 Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet, that he  
 Should leave the helm, and, like a fearful lad,  
 With tearful eyes add water to the sea ;  
 And give more strength to that which hath too  
 much ?

While in his moan the ship splits on the rock,  
 Which industry and courage might have sav'd ?  
 Ah, what a shame ! ah, what a fault were this !

*Third Part Henry VI. act 5. sc. 5.*

*Oroonoko.* Ha ! thou hast rous'd  
 The lion in his den, he stalks abroad  
 And the wide forest trembles at his roar.  
 I find the danger now.

*Oroonoko, act 3. sc. 2.*

P 2

The

The rules that govern metaphors and allegories, are of two kinds : those of the first kind concern the construction of a metaphor or allegory, and ascertain what are perfect and what are faulty : those of the other kind concern the propriety or impropriety of introduction, in what circumstances these figures may be admitted, and in what circumstances they are out of place. I begin with rules of the first kind; some of which coincide with those already given with respect to similes; some are peculiar to metaphors and allegories.

And in the first place, it has been observed, that a simile cannot be agreeable where the resemblance is either too strong or too faint. This holds equally in a metaphor and allegory; and the reason is the same in all. In the following instances, the resemblance is too faint to be agreeable.

*Malcolm*, ——— But there's no bottom, none,  
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust.

*Macbeth*, act 4. sc. 4.  
The

The best way to judge of this metaphor, is to convert it into a simile; which would be bad, because there is scarce any resemblance betwixt lust and a cistern, or betwixt enormous lust and a large cistern.

Again,

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause  
Within the belt of rule.

*Macbeth, act 5. sc. 2.*

There is no resemblance betwixt a distemper'd cause and any body that can be confined within a belt.

Again,

Steep me in poverty to the very lips.

*Othello, act 4. sc. 9.*

Poverty here must be conceived a fluid, which it resembles not in any manner.

Speaking to Bolingbroke banish'd for six years.

The fullen passage of thy weary steps  
Esteem a foil, wherein thou art to set

The

The precious jewel of thy home-return. . . .

*Richard II. act 1. sc. 6.*

Again,

Here is a letter, lady,  
And every word in it a gaping wound  
Issuing life-blood.

*Merchant of Venice, act 3. sc. 3.*

The following metaphor is strained beyond all endurance. Timur-bec, known to us by the name of Tamarlane the Great, writes to Bajazet Emperor of the Ottomans in the following terms.

Where is the monarch who dares resist us ? where is the potentate who doth not glory in being numbered among our attendants ? As for thee, descended from a Turcoman sailer, since the vessel of thy unbounded ambition hath been wreck'd in the gulf of thy self-love, it would be proper, that thou shouldst take in the sails of thy temerity, and cast the anchor of repentance in the port of sincerity and justice, which is the port of safety ; lest the tempest of our vengeance make thee perish in the sea of the punishment thou deservest.

Such strained figures, it is observable, are  
not



not unfrequent in the first dawn of refinement. The mind in a new enjoyment knows no bounds, and is generally carried to excess, till experience discover the just medium.

Secondly, whatever resemblance subjects may have, it is wrong to put one for another if they bear no mutual proportion. Where a very high and a very low subject are compared, the simile takes on an air of burlesk; and the same will be the effect, where the one is imagined to be the other, as in a metaphor, or made to represent the other, as in an allegory.

Thirdly, these figures, a metaphor in particular, ought not to be extended to a great length, nor be crowded with many minute circumstances; for in that case it is scarcely possible to avoid obscurity. It is difficult, during any course of time, to support a lively image of one thing being another. A metaphor drawn out to any length, instead of illustrating or enlivening the principal subject, becomes disagreeable by overstraining the mind. Cowley is extremely

treachery licentious in this way. Take the following instance:

Great, and wise conqu'ror, who where-e'er  
 Thou com'st, dost fortify, and settle there!  
 Who canst defend as well as get;  
 And never hadst one quarter beat up yet;  
 Now thou art in, thou ne'er will part  
 With one inch of my vanquish'd heart;  
 For since thou took'st it by assault from me,  
 'Tis garrison'd so strong with thoughts of thee  
 It fears no beauteous enemy.

For the same reason, however agreeable at first long allegories may be by their novelty, they never afford any lasting pleasure: witness the *Fairy Queen*, which with great power of expression, variety of images, and melody of versification, is scarce ever read a second time.

In the fourth place, the comparison carried on in a simile, being in a metaphor sunk, and the principal subject being imagined that very thing which it only resembles, an opportunity is furnished to describe it in terms taken strictly or literally with respect to its imagined nature. This suggests another

another rule, That in constructing a metaphor, the writer ought to confine himself to the simplest expressions, and make use of such words only as are applicable literally to the imagined nature of his subject. Figurative words ought carefully to be avoided; for such complicated images, instead of setting the principal subject in a strong light, involve it in a cloud; and it is well if the reader, without rejecting by the lump, endeavour patiently to gather the plain meaning, regardless of the figures:

A stubborn and unconquerable flame  
 Creeps in his veins, and drinks the streams of life.  
*Lady Jane Gray, act 1. sc. 1.*

Copied from Ovid,

Sorbent avidæ præcordia flammæ.  
*Metamorphoses, lib. ix. 172.*

Let us analyze this expression. That a fever may be imagined a flame, I admit; though more than one step is necessary to come at the resemblance. A fever, by heating the body, resembles fire; and it is no stretch to imagine a fever to be a fire.

Again, by a figure of speech, flame may be put for fire, because they are commonly conjoined; and therefore a fever may also be imagined a flame. But now admitting a fever to be a flame, its effects ought to be explained in words that agree literally to a flame. This rule is not observed here; for a flame *drinks* figuratively only, not properly.

King Henry to his son Prince Henry:

Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,  
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart  
To stab at half an hour of my frail life.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 4. sc. 11.*

Such faulty metaphors are pleasantly ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*:

*Physician.* Sir, to conclude, the place you fill has more than amply exacted the talents of a wary pilot; and all these threatening storms, which, like impregnate clouds, hover o'er our heads, will, when they once are grasp'd but by the eye of reason, melt into fruitful showers of blessings on the people.

*Bayes.* Pray mark that allegory. Is not that good?

*Johnson.*

*Johns.* Yes, that grasping of a storm with the eye, is admirable. *Act 2. sc. 1.*

Fifthly, The jumbling different metaphors in the same sentence, or the beginning with one metaphor and ending with another, is commonly called a mixt metaphor. Quintilian bears testimony against it in the bitterest terms: "Nam id quoque in primis est custodiendum, ut quo ex genere cœperis translationis, hoc definas. Multi enim, cum initium a tempestate sumpserunt, incendio aut ruina finiunt: quæ est inconsequentia rerum fœdissima." *L. 8. cap. 6. § 2.*

*K. Henry.* ——— Will you again unknit  
This churlish knot of all-aborred war,  
And move in that obedient orb again,  
Where you did give a fair and natural light?  
*First Part Henry IV. act 5. sc. 1.*

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outrag'ous fortune;  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them.  
*Hamlet, act 3. sc. 2.*

In the sixth place, It is unpleasant to join different metaphors in the same period, even where they are preserved distinct. It is difficult to imagine the subject to be first one thing and then another in the same period without interval: the mind is distracted by the rapid transition; and when the imagination is put on such hard duty, its images are too faint to produce any good effect:

At regina gravi jamdudum saucia cura,  
Vulnus alit venis, et cæco carpitur igni.

*Æneid. iv. 1.*

————— Est mollis flamma medullas  
Interea, et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.

*Æneid. iv. 66.*

Motum ex Metello consule civicum,  
Bellique causas, et vitia, et modos,  
Ludumque fortunæ, gravesque  
Principum amicitias, et arma  
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,  
Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ,  
Tractas, et incedis per ignes  
Subpositos cineri doloso.

*Horat. Carm. l. 2. ode 1.*

In

In the last place, It is still worse to jumble together metaphorical and natural expression, or to construct a period so as that it must be understood partly metaphorically partly literally. The imagination cannot follow with sufficient ease changes so sudden and unprepared. A metaphor begun and not carried on, hath no beauty; and instead of light there is nothing but obscurity and confusion. Instances of such incorrect composition are without number. I shall, for a specimen, select a few from different authors:

Speaking of Britain,

This precious stone set in the sea  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house  
Against the envy of less happier lands.

*Richard II. act 2. sc. 1.*

In the first line Britain is figured to be a precious stone. In the following lines, Britain, divested of her metaphorical dress, is presented to the reader in her natural appearance.

These

These growing feathers pluck'd from Cæsar's  
wing,

Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,  
Who else would soar above the view of men,  
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

*Julius Cæsar, act 1, sc. 1.*

Rebus angustis animosus atque  
Fortis adpare : sapienter idem  
Contrahe vento nimium secundo  
Turgida vela.

The following is a miserable jumble of expressions, arising from an unsteady view of the subject betwixt its figurative and natural appearance.

But now from gath'ring clouds destruction pours,  
Which ruins with mad rage our halcyon hours :  
Mists from black jealousies the tempest form,  
Whilst late divisions reinforce the storm.

*Dispensary, canto 3.*

To thee, the world its present homage pays,  
The harvest early, but mature the praise.

*Pope's imitation of Horace, b. 2.*

Oui,



Oui, sa pudeur n'est que franche grimace,  
 Qu'une ombre de vertu qui garde mal la place,  
 Et qui s'évanouit, comme l'on peut savoir  
 Aux rayons du soleil qu'une bourse fait voir.

*Mellicre, L'Etourdi, act 3. sc. 2.*

Et son feu depourvû de sensé et de lecture,  
 S'éteint à chaque pas, faute de nourriture.

*Boileau, L'art poétique, chant. 3. l. 319.*

Dryden, in his dedication to the translation  
 of *Juvenal*, says,

When thus, as I may say, before the use of the  
 loadstone, or knowledge of the compass, I was  
 sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the  
 pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the  
 French stage among the moderns, &c.

There is a time when factions, by the vehemence of their own fermentation, stun and disable one another.

*Bolingbroke.*

This fault of jumbling the figure and plain expression into one confused mass, is not less common in allegory than in metaphor. Take the following example.

— Heu!

— Heu! quoties fidem,

Mutatoſque Deos flebit, et aſpera

Nigris æquora ventis

Emirabitur inſolens,

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aureâ :

Qui ſemper vacuam, ſemper amabilem

Sperat, neſcius auræ

Fallacis.

*Horat. Carm. l. i. ode 5.*

Lord Halifax, ſpeaking of the ancient fabuliſts : “ They (ſays he) wrote in ſigns  
 “ and ſpoke in parables : all their fables  
 “ carry a double meaning : the ſtory is  
 “ one and entire ; the characters the ſame  
 “ throughout ; not broken or changed,  
 “ and always conformable to the nature  
 “ of the creature they introduce. They  
 “ never tell you, that the dog which ſnapp’d  
 “ at a ſhadow, loſt his troop of horſe ; that  
 “ would be unintelligible. This is his (Dry-  
 “ den’s) new way of telling a ſtory, and  
 “ confounding the moral and the fable to-  
 “ gether.” After inſtancing from the  
 hind and panther, he goes on thus :  
 “ What relation has the hind to our Sa-  
 “ viour ? or what notion have we of a  
 “ panther’s

“ panther’s bible? If you say he means  
 “ the church, how does the church feed  
 “ on lawns, or range in the forest? Let it  
 “ be always a church or always a cloven-  
 “ footed beast, for we cannot bear his  
 “ shifting the scene every line.”

A few words more upon allegory. Nothing gives greater pleasure than this figure, when the representative subject bears a strong analogy, in all its circumstances, to that which is represented. But the choice is seldom so lucky; the resemblance of the representative subject to the principal, being generally so faint and obscure, as to puzzle and not please. An allegory is still more difficult in painting than in poetry. The former can show no resemblance but what appears to the eye: the latter hath many other resources for showing the resemblance. With respect to what the Abbé du Bos \* terms mixt allegorical compositions, these may do in poetry, because in writing the allegory can easily be distinguished from the historical part: no person

\* *Reflexions sur la Poësie, &c.* vol. I. sect. 24.

mistakes Virgil's Fame for a real being. But such a mixture in a picture is intolerable ; because in a picture the objects must appear all of the same kind, wholly real or wholly emblematical. The history of Mary de Medicis, in the palace of Luxembourg, painted by Rubens, is in a vicious taste, by a perpetual jumble of real and allegorical personages, which produce a discordance of parts and an obscurity upon the whole: witness in particular, the tablature representing the arrival of Mary de Medicis at Marseilles : mixt with the real personages, the Nereids and Tritons appear sounding their shells. Such a mixture of fiction and reality in the same group, is strangely absurd. The picture of Alexander and Roxana, described by Lucian, is gay and fanciful : but it suffers by the allegorical figures. It is not in the wit of man to invent an allegorical representation deviating farther from any appearance of resemblance, than one exhibited by Lewis XIV. *anno* 1664 ; in which an overgrown chariot, intended to represent that of the sun, is  
dragg'd

dragg'd along, surrounded with men and women, representing the four ages of the world, the celestial signs, the seasons, the hours, &c. : a monstrous composition ; and yet scarce more absurd than Guido's tablat-ure of Aurora.

In an allegory, as well as in a metaphor, terms ought to be chosen that properly and literally are applicable to the representative subject. Nor ought any circumstance to be added, that is not proper to the representa-tive subject, however justly it may be ap-plicable figuratively to the principal. Upon this account the following allegory is faulty.

Ferus et Cupido,  
Semper ardentis acuens sagittas  
Cote *cruentâ*.

*Horat. l. 2. ode 8.*

For though blood may suggest the cru-elty of love, it is an improper or immaterial circumstance in the representative subject : water, not blood, is proper for a whetstone.

We proceed to the next head, which is, to examine in what circumstances these fi-

gures are proper, in what improper. **This** inquiry is not altogether superseded by **what** is said upon the same subject in the chapter of comparisons; because, upon trial, it will be found, that a short metaphor or allegory may be proper, where a simile, drawn out to a greater length, and in its nature more solemn, would scarce be relished. The difference however is not considerable; and in most instances the same rules are applicable to both. And, in the first place, a metaphor, as well as a simile, are excluded from common conversation, and from the description of ordinary incidents.

In the next place, in any severe passion which totally occupies the mind, metaphor is unnatural. For that reason, we must condemn the following speech of Macbeth.

Methought, I heard a voice cry, Sleep no more!  
Macbeth doth murder sleep; the innocent sleep;  
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of Care,  
The birth of each day's life, fore Labour's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast.——

*Act 2. sc. 3.*

The

The next example, of deep despair, beside the highly figurative style, hath more the air of raving than of sense :

*Calista.* Is it the voice of thunder, or my father ?

Madness ! Confusion ! let the storm come on,  
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me,  
Dash my devoted bark ; ye furies, break it ;  
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.  
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,  
Peace shall return, and all be calm again.

*Fair Penitent, act 4.*

The metaphor I next introduce, is sweet and lively, but it suits not the fiery temper of Chamont, inflamed with passion. Parables are not the language of wrath venting itself without restraint :

*Chamont.* You took her up a little tender flower,  
Just sprouted on a bank, which the next frost  
Had nip'd ; and with a careful loving hand,  
Transplanted her into your own fair garden,  
Where the sun always shines : there long she flourish'd,

Grew sweet to sense and lovely to the eye,  
Till at the last a cruel spoiler came,

Cropt

Cropt this fair rose, and rifled all its sweetness,  
Then cast it like a loathsome weed away.

*Orphan, act 4.*

The following speech, full of imagery, is not natural in grief and dejection of mind.

*Gonzalez.* O my son! from the blind dotage  
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.  
For thee I've been ambitious, base and bloody :  
For thee I've plung'd into this sea of sin;  
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,  
While t'other bore the crown, (to wreathe thy brow),  
Whose weight has sunk me ere I reach'd the shore.

*Mourning Bride, act 5. sc. 6.*

The finest picture that ever was drawn of deep distress, is in Macbeth \*, where Macduff is represented lamenting his wife and children, inhumanly murdered by the tyrant. Struck with the news, he questions the messenger over and over; not that he doubted the fact, but that his heart revolted against so cruel a misfortune. After struggling some time with his grief, he turns from his wife and children to their savage

\* Act 4. sc. 6.

butcher ;



butcher ; and then gives vent to his resentment ; but still with manliness and dignity :

O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,  
And braggart with my tongue. But, gentle Heav'n!  
Cut short all intermission : front to front  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself ;  
Within my sword's length set him —— If he 'scape,  
Then Heav'n forgive him too.

This passage is a delicious picture of human nature. One expression only seems doubtful. In examining the messenger, Macduff expresses himself thus :

He hath no children —— all my pretty ones !  
Did you fay all ? what all ? Oh, hell-kite ! all ?  
What ! all my pretty little chickens and their dam,  
At one fell swoop !

Metaphorical expression, I am sensible, may sometimes be used with grace, where a regular simile would be intolerable : but there are situations so overwhelming, as not to admit even the slightest metaphor. It requires great delicacy of taste to determine with firmness, whether the present case be of that nature. I incline to think it is ; and  
yet

yet I would not willingly alter a single word of this admirable scene.

But metaphorical language is proper when a man struggles to bear with dignity or decency a misfortune however great. The struggle agitates and animates the mind:

*Wolsey.* Farewell; a long farewell; to all my greatness!

This is the state of man; to day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,  
And then he falls as I do.

*Henry VIII. act 3. sc. 6.*

## S E C T. VII.

### *Figure of Speech.*

**I**N the section immediately foregoing, a figure of speech is defined, "The employing

“ ploying a word in a sense different from  
“ what is proper to it ;” and the new or  
uncommon sense of the word is termed *the*  
*figurative sense*. The figurative sense must  
have a relation to that which is proper; and  
the more intimate the relation is, the figure  
is the more happy. How ornamental this  
figure is to language, will not be readily i-  
maged by any one who hath not given  
peculiar attention. I shall endeavour to dis-  
play its capital beauties and advantages. In  
the first place, a word used figuratively, to-  
gether with its new sense, suggests what it  
commonly bears: and thus it has the effect  
to present two objects; one signified by the  
figurative sense, which may be termed *the*  
*principal object*; and one signified by the  
proper sense, which may be termed *accesso-*  
*ry*. The principal makes a part of the  
thought; the accessory is merely ornamen-  
tal. In this respect, a figure of speech is  
precisely similar to concordant sounds in  
music, which, without contributing to the  
melody, make it harmonious. I explain  
myself by examples. *Youth*, by a figure of  
speech, is termed *the morning of life*. This  
VOL. III.      S      expression

expression signifies *youth*, the principal object, which enters into the thought: but it suggests, at the same time, the proper sense of *morning*; and this accessory object being in itself beautiful and connected by resemblance to the principal object, is not a little ornamental. I give another example, of a different kind, where an attribute is expressed figuratively, *Imperious ocean*. Together with the figurative meaning of the epithet *imperious*, there is suggested its proper meaning, *viz.* the stern authority of a despotic prince. Upon this figurative power of words, Vida descants with great elegance:

Nonne vides, verbis ut veris sæpe relictis  
 Accersant simulata, aliundeque nomina porro  
 Transportent, aptentque aliis ea rebus; ut ipsæ,  
 Exuviasque novas, res, insolitosque colores  
 Indutæ, sæpe externi mirentur amictus  
 Unde illi, lætæque aliena luce fruantur,  
 Mutatoque habitu, nec jam sua nomina malleant?  
 Sæpe ideo, cum bella canunt, incendia credas  
 Cernere, diluviumque ingens surgentibus undis.  
 Contrà etiam Martis pugnas imitabitur ignis,  
 Cum furit accensis acies Vulcania campis.

Nec

Nec turbato oritur quondam minor æquore pugna :  
 Confligunt animosi Euri certamine vasto  
 Inter se, pugnantque adversis molibus undæ,  
 Usque adeo passim sua res insignia lætæ  
 Permutantque, juvantque vicissim; & mutua sese  
 Altera in alterius transformat protinus ora.  
 Tum specie capti gaudent spectare legentes :  
 Nam diversa simul datur è re cernere eadem  
 Multarum simulacra animo subeuntia rerum.

*Poet. lib. 3. l. 44.*

In the next place, this figure possesses a signal power of aggrandising an object, by the following means. Words, which have no original beauty but what arises from their sound, acquire an adventitious beauty from their meaning. A word signifying any thing that is agreeable, becomes by that means agreeable; for the agreeableness of the object is communicated to its name \*. This acquired beauty, by the force of custom, adheres to the word even when used figuratively; and the beauty received from the thing it properly signifies, is communicated to the thing which it is made to fig-

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 4.

nify figuratively. Consider the foregoing expression *Imperious ocean*, how much more elevated it is than *Stormy ocean*.

Thirdly, this figure hath a happy effect in preventing the familiarity of proper names. The familiarity of a proper name, is communicated to the thing it signifies by means of their intimate connection; and the thing is thereby brought down in our feeling \*. This bad effect is prevented by using a figurative word instead of one that is proper; as, for example, when we express the sky by terming it *the blue vault of heaven*. For though no work made with hands can compare with the sky in magnificence, the expression however is good, by preventing the object from being brought down by the familiarity of its proper name. With respect to the degrading familiarity of proper names, Vida has the following passage.

Hinc si dura mihi passus dicendus Ulysses,

\* I have often regretted, that a factious spirit of opposition to the reigning family made it necessary in public worship to distinguish the King by his proper name. One will scarce imagine, who has not made the trial, how much better it sounds to pray for our Sovereign Lord the King, without any addition.

Non

Non illum vero memorabo nomine, sed qui  
Et mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes,  
Naufragus everſæ poſt ſæva incendia Trojæ,

*Poet. lib. 2. l. 46.*

Laſtly, by this figure language is enriched and rendered more copious. In that reſpect, were there no other, a figure of ſpeech is a happy invention. This property is finely touched by Vida :

Quinetiam agricolas ea fandi nota voluptas  
Exercet, dum læta ſeges, dum trudere gemmas  
Incipiunt vites, ſitientiaque ætheris imbrem  
Prata bibunt, ridentque ſatis ſurgentibus agri.  
Hanc vulgo ſpeciem propriæ penuria vocis  
Intulit, indiſtisque urgens in rebus egeſtas.  
Quippe ubi ſe vera offendeſbant nomina nuſquam,  
Fas erat hinc atque hinc transferre ſimillima veris.

*Poet. lib. 3. l. 90.*

The beauties I have mentioned belong to every figure of ſpeech. Several other beauties peculiar to one or other ſort, I ſhall have occaſion to remark afterward :

Not only ſubjects, but qualities, actions, effects, may be expreſſed figuratively. Thus

as

as to subjects, *the gates of breath* for the lips, *the watery kingdom* for the ocean. As to qualities, *fierce* for stormy, in the expression *Fierce winter* : *altus* for profundus, *altus puteus*, *altum mare* : *Breathing* for perspiring, *Breathing plants*. Again, as to actions, the sea *rages* : Time will *melt* her frozen thoughts : Time *kills* grief. An effect is put for the cause, as *lux* for the sun ; and a cause for the effect, as *boum labores* for corn. The relation of resemblance is one plentiful source of figures of speech ; and nothing is more common than to apply to one object the name of another that resembles it in any respect. Height, size, and wordly greatness, though in themselves they have no resemblance, produce emotions in the mind that have a resemblance ; and, led by this resemblance, we naturally express worldly greatness by height or size. One feels a certain uneasiness in looking down to a great depth : and hence depth is made to express any thing disagreeable by excess ; as *depth* of grief, *depth* of despair. Again, height of place and time long past, produce similar feelings ; and hence the expression



pression, *Ut alius repetam*. Distance in past time, producing a strong feeling, is put for any strong feeling: *Nihil nobis antiquius nostræ amicitia*. Shortness with relation to space, for shortness with relation to time: *Brevis æst laboro; obscurus fœ*. Suffering a punishment resembles paying a debt: hence *pendere pœnas*. Upon the same account, light may be put for glory, sun-shine for prosperity, and weight for importance.

Many words, originally figurative, having, by long and constant use, lost their figurative power, are degraded to the inferior rank of proper terms. Thus the words that express the operations of the mind, have in all languages been originally figurative. The reason holds in all, that when these operations came first under consideration, there was no other way of describing them but by what they resembled. It was not practicable to give them proper names, as may be done to objects that can be ascertained by sight and touch. A *soft* nature, *jarring* tempers, *weight* of wo, *pompous* phrase, *beget* compassion, *assuage* grief, *break* a vow, *bend* the eye downward, *shower* down

down curses, *drown'd* in tears, *wrapt* in joy, *warm'd* with eloquence, *loaden* with spoils, and a thousand other expressions of the like nature, have lost their figurative sense. Some terms there are, that cannot be said to be either purely figurative or altogether proper: originally figurative, they are tending to simplicity, without having lost altogether their figurative power. Virgil's *Regina saucia cura*, is perhaps one of these expressions. With ordinary readers, *saucia* will be considered as expressing simply the effect of grief; but one of a lively imagination will exalt the phrase into a figure.

To epitomise this subject, and at the same time to give a clear view of it, I cannot think of a better method, than to present to the reader a list of the several relations upon which figures of speech are commonly founded. This list I divide into two tables; one of subjects expressed figuratively, and one of attributes.

## FIRST

## FIRST TABLE.

*Subjects expressed figuratively.*

I. A word proper to one subject employed figuratively to express a resembling subject.

There is no figure of speech so frequent, as what is derived from the relation of resemblance. Youth, for example, is signified figuratively by the *morning* of life. The life of a man resembles a natural day in several particulars. The morning is the beginning of day, youth the beginning of life: the morning is chearful, so is youth; &c. By another resemblance, a bold warrior is termed the *thunderbolt* of war; a multitude of troubles, a *sea* of troubles.

No other figure of speech possesses so many different beauties, as that which is founded on resemblance. Beside the beauties above mentioned, common to all sorts, it possesses in particular the beauty of a metaphor or of a simile. A figure of speech

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built

built upon resemblance, suggests always a comparison betwixt the principal subject and the accessory; and by this means every good effect of a metaphor or simile, may, in a short and lively manner, be produced by this figure of speech.

2. A word proper to the effect employ'd figuratively to express the cause.

*Lux* for the sun. *Shadow* for cloud. A helmet is signified by the expression *glittering terror*. A tree by *shadow* or *umbrage*. Hence the expression,

Nec habet Pelion umbras.

*Ovid.*

Where the dun umbrage hangs. *Spring, l. 1023.*

A wound is made to signify an arrow:

Vulnere non pedibus te consequar.

*Ovid.*

There is a peculiar force and beauty in this figure. The word which signifies figuratively the principal subject, denotes it to be a cause by suggesting the effect.

3. A

3. A word proper to the cause, employ'd figuratively to express the effect.

*Bonumque labores* for corn. *Sorrow* or *grief* for tears.

Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,  
Again unmann'd, a show'r of *sorrow* shed.

Streaming *Grief* his faded cheek bedew'd.

*Blindness* for darkness:

*Cæcis erramus in undis.*

*Æneid.* iii. 200.

There is a peculiar energy in this figure similar to that in the former. The figurative name denotes the subject to be an effect by suggesting its cause.

4. Two things being intimately connected, the proper name of the one employ'd figuratively to signify the other.

*Day* for light. *Night* for darkness.  
Hence, A sudden night. *Winter* for a storm at sea.

Interea magnò misceri murmure pontum,  
Emissamque Hyemem sensit Neptunus.

*Æneid. i. 128.*

This last figure would be too bold for a British writer, as a storm at sea is not inseparably connected with winter in this climate.

5. A word proper to an attribute employ'd figuratively to denote the subject.

*Youth* and *beauty* for those who are young and beautiful:

Youth and beauty shall be laid in dust.

*Majesty* for the King :

What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form,  
In which the *Majesty* of buried Denmark  
Did sometime march?

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 1.*

—— Or have ye chosen this place,  
After the toils of battle, to repose  
Your weary'd *virtue*?

*Paradise Lost.*

*Verdure*

*Verdure* for a green field. *Summer*, l. 301.

Speaking of cranes :

To pigmy nations wounds and death they bring,  
And all the *war* descends upon the wing.

*Iliad* iii. 10.

Cool *age* advances venerably wife.

*Iliad* iii. 149,

The peculiar beauty of this figure arises from suggesting an attribute that embellishes the subject, or puts it in a stronger light.

6. A complex term employ'd figuratively to denote one of the component parts:

*Funus* for a dead body. *Burial* for a grave.

7. The name of one of the component parts instead of the complex term.

*Tæda* for a marriage. The *East* for a country situated east from us. *Jovis vestigia servat*, for imitating Jupiter in general.

8. A word signifying time or place employ'd

ploy'd figuratively to denote a connected subject.

*Clime* for a nation, or for a constitution of government : Hence the expression, *Merciful clime*. *Fleecy winter* for snow. *Seculum felix*.

9. A part for the whole.

The *pole* for the earth. The *head* for the person.

Triginta minas pro capite tuo dedi. *Plautus*.

*Tergum* for the man :

Fugiens tergum. *Ovid*.

*Vultus* for the man :

Jam fulgor armorum fugaces  
Terret equos, equitumque vultus. *Horat*.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam chari capitis ? *Horat*.

Dumque virent *genus*, *Horat*.

Thy



Thy growing virtues justify'd my cares,  
And promis'd comfort to my *silver hairs*.

*Iliad ix. 616.*

——— Forthwith from the pool he rears  
His mighty *stature*.

*Paradise Lost.*

The silent *heart* which grief assails.      *Parnell.*

The peculiar beauty of this figure consists in marking out that part which makes the greatest figure.

10. The name of the container employ'd figuratively to signify what is contained.

*Grove* for the birds in it: *Vocal grove*.  
*Ships* for the seamen: *Agonizing ships*.  
*Mountains* for the sheep pasturing upon them: *Bleating mountains*. *Zaryntbus, Ithaca, &c.* for the inhabitants. *Ex mæstis domibus*. *Livy*.

11. The name of the sustainer employ'd figuratively to signify what is sustained.

*Altar*

*Altar* for the sacrifice. *Field* for the battle fought upon it. *Well-fought field*.

12. The name of the materials employ'd figuratively to signify the things made of them.

*Ferrum* for *gladius*.

13. The names of the Heathen deities employ'd figuratively to signify what they patronise.

*Jove* for the air. *Mars* for war. *Venus* for beauty. *Cupid* for love. *Ceres* for corn. *Neptune* for the sea. *Vulcan* for fire.

This figure bestows great elevation upon the subject; and therefore ought to be confined to the higher strains of poetry.

## SECOND TABLE.

*Attributes expressed figuratively.*

1. When two attributes are connected,  
the

the name of the one may be employ'd figuratively to express the other.

Purity and virginity are attributes of the same person. Hence the expression, *Virgin snow* for pure snow.

2. A word signifying properly an attribute of one subject, employ'd figuratively to express a resembling attribute of another subject.

*Tottering state. Imperious ocean. Angry flood. Raging tempest. Shallow fears.*

My sure divinity shall bear the shield,  
And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.  
*Odyssey xx. 61.*

*Black omen*, for an omen that portends bad fortune:

*Ater odor.* *Virgil.*

The peculiar beauty of this figure arises from suggesting a comparison.

3. A word proper to the subject, employ'd to express one of its attributes.

*Mens* for *intellectus*. *Mens* for a resolution.

*Istam, oro, exue mentem.*

4. When two subjects have a resemblance by a common quality, the name of the one subject may be employ'd figuratively to denote that quality in the other.

*Summer* life for agreeable life.

5. The name of the instrument, made to signify the power of employing it.

——— *Melpomene, cui liquidam pater  
Vocem cum cithara dedit.*

The ample field of figurative expression display'd in these tables, affords great scope for reasoning and reflection. Several of the observations relating to metaphor, are applicable to figures of speech. These I shall

shall slightly retouch, with ~~some~~ additions peculiarly adapted to the present subject.

In the first place, as the figure under consideration is built upon relation, we find from experience, and it must be obvious from reason, that the beauty of the figure depends on the intimacy of the relation betwixt the figurative and proper sense of the word. A slight resemblance, in particular, will never make this figure agreeable. The expression, for example, *drink down a secret*, for listening to a secret with attention, is harsh and uncouth, because there is scarce any resemblance betwixt *listening* and *drinking*. The expression *weighty crack*, used by Ben Johnson for *loud crack*, is worse if possible: a loud sound has not the slightest resemblance to a piece of matter that is weighty. The following expression of Lucretius is not less faulty. “ Et  
“ lepidò quæ sunt *fucata* sonore.” i. 645.

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Sed magis

Pugnas et exactos tyrannos

U 2

Denfum

*Densum humeris bibis aure vulgus.*

*Horat. Carm. l. 2. ode 13.*

Phemius! let acts of gods, and heroes old,  
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,  
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ,  
Such the pleas'd ear *will drink* with silent joy,

*Odyssey i. 433.*

*Srepitumque exterritus haufit.*

*Æneid. vi. 559.*

— Write, my Queen,  
And with mine eyes I'll *drink* the words you send.

*Cymbeline, act 1. sc. 2.*

As thus th' effulgence tremulous I *drink*.

*Summer, l. 1684.*

*Neque audit currus habenas.*

*Georg. i. 514.*

O Prince! (Lycaon's valiant son reply'd)  
As thine the steeds, be thine the task to guide.  
The horses practis'd to their lord's command,  
Shall *bear* the rein, and answer to thy hand.

*Iliad. v. 288.*

The following figures of speech seem altogether wild and extravagant, the figurative and

and proper meaning, having no connection whatever. *Moving* softness, freshness, *breathes*, *breathing* prospect, *flowing* spring, *dewy* light, *lucid* coolness, and many others of this false coin may be found in Thomson's *Seasons*.

Secondly, the proper sense of the word ought to bear some proportion to the figurative sense, and not soar much above it, nor sink much below it. This rule, as well as the foregoing, is finely illustrated by Vida:

Hæc adeo cum sint, cum fas audere poetis  
 Multa modis multis; tamen observare memento,  
 Si quando haud propriis rem mavis dicere verbis,  
 Translatisque aliunde notis, longeque petitis,  
 Ne nimiam ostendas, quærendo talia, curam.  
 Namque aliqui exercent vim duram, et rebus iniqui  
 Nativam eripiunt formam, indignantibus ipsis,  
 Invitasque jubent alienos sumere vultus.  
 Haud magis imprudens mihi erit, et luminis expers,  
 Qui puero ingentes habitus det ferre gigantis,  
 Quam si quis stabula alta lares appellet equinos,  
 Aut crines magnæ genitricis gramina dicat.

Poet. l. iii. 148.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, in a figure of speech, every circumstance ought to be avoided that agrees with the proper sense only, not the figurative sense; for it is the latter that expresses the thought, and the former serves for no other purpose but to make harmony :

Zacynthus green with ever-shady groves,  
And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves;  
Obtruding on my choice a second lord,  
They press the Hymenean rite abhor'd.

*Odyssey* xix. 152.

Zacynthus here standing figuratively for the inhabitants, the description of the island is quite out of place. It puzzles the reader, by making him doubt whether the word ought to be taken in its proper or figurative sense.

Write, my Queen,  
And with mine eyes? I'll drink the words you send,  
Though ink be made of gall.

*Cymbeline*, act 1. sc. 2.

The disgust one has to drink ink in reality,  
is



is nothing to the purpose where the subject is drinking ink figuratively.

In the fourth place, to draw consequences from a figure of speech, as if the word were to be understood literally, is a gross absurdity, for it is confounding truth with fiction :

Be Moubray's fins so heavy in his bosom,  
That they may break his foaming courser's back,  
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,  
A cairiff recreant to my cousin Hereford.

*Richard II. act 1. sc. 3.*

Sin may be imagined heavy in a figurative sense : but weight in a proper sense belongs to the accessory only ; and therefore to describe the effects of weight, is to desert the principal subject, and to convert the accessory into a principal.

*Cromwell.* How does your Grace?

*Wolsey.* Why, well ;

Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.  
I know myself now, and I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities,

A

A still and quiet conscience. The King has cur'd  
me,

I humbly thank his Grace; and, from these shoulders,  
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity taken

A load would sink a navy, too much honour.

*Henry VIII. act 3. sc. 6.*

Ulysses speaking of Hector :

I wonder now how yonder city stands

When we have here the base and pillar by us.

*Troilus and Cressida, act 4. sc. 2.*

*Othello.* No, my heart is turn'd to stone: I  
strike it and it hurts my hand.

*Othello, act 4. sc. 5.*

Not less, even in this despicable now,

Than when my name fill'd Afric with affrights,

And froze your hearts beneath your torrid zone.

*Don Sebastian King of Portugal, act 1.*

How long a space, since first I lov'd, it is!

To look into a glass I fear,

And am surpris'd with wonder, when I miss

Grey hairs and wrinkles there.

*Cowley, vol. 1. p. 86.*

I chose the flourishing tree in all the park  
 With freshest boughs, and fairest head;  
 I cut my love into his gentle bark,  
 And in three days behold 'tis dead;  
 My very written flames so violent be,  
 They've burnt and wither'd up the tree.

*Cowley, vol. 1. p. 136.*

Ah, mighty Love, that it were inward heat  
 Which made this precious Limbeck sweat!

But what, alas, ah what does it avail  
 That she weeps tears so wond'rous cold,  
 As scarce the asses hoof can hold,  
 So cold, that I admire they fall not hail.

*Cowley, vol. 1. p. 132.*

Je crains que cette saison  
 Ne nous amenne la peste;  
 La gueule du chien celeste  
 Vomit feu sur l'horison.  
 A fin que je m'en délivre,  
 Je veux lire ton gros livre  
 Jusques au dernier feüillet:  
 Tout ce que ta plume trace,  
 Robinet, a de la glace  
 A faire trembler Juillet.

*Maynard.*

In me tota ruens Venus  
 Cyprum deseruit.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 19.*

*Almeria.* O Alphonso, Alphonso!  
 Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight,  
 No time shall raise thee from my memory;  
 No, I will live to be thy monument:  
 The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb;  
 But in my heart thou art interr'd.

*Mourning Bride, act 1. sc. 1.*

This would be very right, if there were any inconsistency in being interred in one place really and in another place figuratively.

From considering that a word employ'd in a figurative sense suggests at the same time its proper meaning, a fifth rule occurs, That to raise a figure of speech, we ought to use no word, the proper sense of which is inconsistent or incongruous with the subject: for no incongruity, far less inconsistency, whether real or imagined, ought to enter into the expression of any subject:

*Interea genitor Tyberini ad fluminis undam  
 Vulnera siccat lymphis ———*

*Æneid. x. 833.*

Tres

Tres adeo incertos cæca caligine soles  
Erramus pelago, totidem sine sidere noctes.

*Æneid. iii. 203.*

The foregoing rule may be extended to form a sixth, That no epithet ought to be given to the figurative sense of a word that agrees not also with its proper sense :

—————Dicat Opuntiaæ

Frater Megillæ, quo beatus

Vulnere.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 27.*

Parcus deorum cultor, et infrequens,

Infanientis dum sapientiæ

Consultus erro.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 34.*

Seventhly, The crowding into one period or thought different figures of speech, is not less faulty than crowding metaphors in that manner. The mind is distracted in the quick transition from one image to another, and is puzzled instead of being pleased :

I am of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows.

*Hamlet.*

My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound.

*Odyss. i. 439.*

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Ah miser,  
 Quantâ laboras in *Charybdi* !  
 Digne puer meliore *flammâ*.  
 Quæ saga, quis te solvere *Theſſalis*  
 Magus *venenis*, quis poterit deus?  
 Vix illigatum te triformi  
 Pegafus expediet *Chimæra*.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 27.*

Eighthly, If crowding figures be bad, it is still worse to graft one figure upon another. For instance,

While his keen falchion drinks the warriors lives.

*Iliad xi. 211.*

A falchion drinking the warriors blood is a figure built upon resemblance, which is passable. But then in the expression, *lives* is again put for blood ; and by thus grafting one figure upon another the expression is rendered obscure and unpleasant.

Ninthly, Intricate and involved figures, that can scarce be analized or reduced to plain language, are least of all tolerable :

Votis

Votis incendimus aras.

*Æneid. iii. 279.*

———— Onerantque canistris

Dona laboratæ Cereris.

*Æneid. viii. 180.*

Vulcan to the Cyclopes,

Arma acri facienda viro: nunc viribus ulus,

Nunc manibus rapidis, omni nunc arte magistra:

*Præcipitate moras.*

*Æneid. viii. 441.*

———— Huic gladio, perque ærea futa

Per tunicam squalentem auro, latus *haurit* apertum.

*Æneid. x. 313.*

Semotique prius tarda necessitas

Lethi, corripuit gradum.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 3.*

Scribêris Vario fortis, et hostium

Victor, Mæonii carminis *alite*.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 6.*

Else shall our fates be number'd with the dead.

*Iliad v. 294.*

Commatural death the fate of war confounds.

*Iliad viii. 85. and xi. 117.*

Speaking

Speaking of Proteus,

Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,  
The mimic force of every savage shape.

*Odyss.* iv. 563.

Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen  
The piteous object of a prostrate Queen.

*Ibid.* iv. 952.

The mingling tempest waves its gloom.

*Autumn,* 337.

A various sweetness swells the gentle race.

*Ibid.* 640.

A sober calm fleeces unbounded ether. *Ibid.* 967.

The distant water-fall swells in the breeze.

*Winter,* 738.

In the tenth place, When a subject is introduced by its proper name, it is absurd to attribute to it the properties of a different subject to which the word is sometimes apply'd in a figurative sense:

Hear me, oh Neptune ! thou whose arms are hurl'd  
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

*Odyss.* ix. 617.

Neptune



Neptune is here introduced personally, and not figuratively for the ocean : the description therefore, which is only applicable to the ocean, is altogether improper.

It is not sufficient, that a figure of speech be regularly constructed, and be free from blemish : it requires taste to discern when it is proper when improper ; and taste, I suspect, is the only guide we can rely on. One however may gather from reflection and experience, that ornaments and graces suit not any of the dispiriting passions, nor are proper for expressing any thing grave and important. In familiar conversation, they are in some measure ridiculous. Prospero in the *Tempest*, speaking to his daughter Miranda, says,

The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance,  
And say what thou seest yond.

No exception can be taken to the justness of the figure ; and circumstances may be imagined to make it proper : but it is certainly not proper in familiar conversation.

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In the last place, though figures of speech have a charming effect when accurately constructed and properly introduced, they ought however to be scattered with a sparing hand: nothing is more luscious, and nothing consequently more satiating, than redundant ornament of any kind.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XXI.

## Narration and Description.

**H**ORACE, and many writers after him, give instructions for chusing a subject adapted to the genius of the author. But rules of criticism would be endless, did one descend to peculiarities in talent or genius. The aim of the present work is, to consider human nature in general, and to explore what is common to the species. The choice of a subject comes not under such a plan: but the manner of execution comes under it; because the manner of execution is subjected to general rules. These rules respect the things expressed, as well as the language or expression; which suggests a division of the present chapter into two parts; first of thoughts, and next of words. I pretend not to justify this division as entirely accurate. In discoursing

of the thoughts, it is difficult to abstract altogether from words; and still more difficult, in discoursing of the words, to abstract altogether from thought.

The first observation is, That the thoughts which embellish a narration ought to be chaste and solid. While the mind is intent upon facts, it is little disposed to the operations of the imagination. Poetical images in a grave history are intolerable; and yet Strada's Belgic history is full of poetical images. These being discordant with the subject, are disgusting; and they have a still worse effect, by giving an air of fiction to a genuine history. Such flowers ought to be scattered with a sparing hand, even in epic poetry; and at no rate are they proper, till the reader be warmed, and by an enlivened imagination be prepared to relish them: in that state of mind, they are extremely agreeable. But while we are sedate and attentive to an historical chain of facts, we reject with disdain every fiction. This Belgic history is indeed wofully vicious both in matter and form: it is stuffed with  
frigid

frigid and unmeaning reflections, as well as with poetical flashes, which, even laying aside the impropriety, are mere tinsel.

Vida \*, following Horace, recommends a modest commencement of an epic poem; giving for a reason, that the writer ought to husband his fire. This reason has weight; but what is said above suggests a reason still more weighty: Bold thoughts and figures are never relished till the mind be heated and thoroughly engaged, which is not the reader's case at the commencement. Shakespear, in the first part of his history of Henry VI. begins with a sentiment too bold for the most heated imagination:

*Bedford.* Hung be the heav'ns with black, yield  
day to night!

Comets, importing change of times and states,  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars,  
That have consented unto Henry's death!

\* Poet. lib. 2. l. 30.

Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!  
 England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

The passage with which Strada begins his history, is too poetical for a subject of that kind; and at any rate too high for the beginning of a grave performance. A third reason ought to have not less influence than either of the former: A man who, upon his first appearance, endeavours to exhibit all his talents, is never relished; the first periods of a work ought therefore to be short, natural, and simple. Cicero, in his oration, *pro Archia poeta*, errs against this rule: his reader is out of breath at the very first period, which seems never to end. Burnet begins the history of his own times with a period long and intricate.

A third rule or observation is, That where the subject is intended for entertainment solely, not for instruction, a thing ought to be described as it appears, not as it is in reality. In running, for example, the impulse upon the ground is accurately proportioned to the celerity of motion: in appearance

pearance it is otherwise; for a person in swift motion seems to skim the ground, and scarcely to touch it. Virgil, with great taste, describes quick running according to its appearance; and thereby raises an image far more lively, than it could have been by adhering scrupulously to truth:

*Hinc super advenit. Volleæ de gente Camilla,  
Agmen agens equitum et florentes æne catervas,  
Bellatrix: non illi colo calamifera Minervæ  
Fœminæ; affecta manus; sed prælia virgo  
Dura potest, cursuque pedum prævertere ventos.  
Illa vel hinc segetis per summa volaret.  
Gramina: nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas;  
Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumenti,  
Ferret iter; celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.*

*Æneid vii. 803.*

This example is copied by the author of *Telemachus*:

Les Bruciens sont légers à la course comme les cerfs, et comme les daims. On croiroit que l'herbe même la plus tendre n'est point foulée sous leurs pieds; à peine laissent ils dans le sable quelques traces de leurs pas.

*Liv. 10.*

Again,

Again,

Déjà il avoit abattu Eusilas si léger à la course, qu'à peine il imprimoit la trace de ses pas dans le sable, et qui devançoit dans son pays les plus rapides flots de l'Eurotas et de l'Alphée.

*Liv. 20.*

Fourthly, In narration as well as in description, facts and objects ought to be painted so accurately as to form in the mind of the reader distinct and lively images. Every useless circumstance ought indeed to be suppressed, because every such circumstance loads the narration; but if a circumstance be necessary, however slight, it cannot be described too minutely. The force of language consists in raising complete images\*; which cannot be done till the reader, forgetting himself, be transported as by magic into the very place and time of the important action, and be converted, as it were, into a real spectator, beholding every thing that passes. In this view, the narrative in an epic poem ought to rival a picture.

\* Part 1. sect. 6.



in the liveliness and accuracy of its representations: no circumstance must be omitted that tends to make a complete image; because an imperfect image, as well as any other imperfect conception, is cold and uninteresting. I shall illustrate this rule by several examples, giving the first place to a beautiful passage from Virgil.

Qualis *populeâ* mœrens *Philomela* sub umbrâ  
Amisiss queritur *foetus*, quos durus *arator*  
Observans nido *implumes* detraxit.

*Georg. lib. 4. l. 511.*

The poplar, plowman, and unfledged, though not essential in the description, are circumstances that tend to make a complete image, and upon that account are an embellishment.

Again,

Hic viridem *Aeneas* *frondenti ex illice* metam  
Constituit, signum nautis.

*Æneid. v. 129.*

Horace,

Homer, addressing to Fortune :

Te pauper ambit sollicita prece  
Ruris colonus : te dominam æquoris,  
Quicumque Bithynâ laceffit  
Carpathium pelagus carinâ.

*Carm. lib. 1. vde 35.*

——— Illum ex moenibus hosticis

Matrona bellantis tyranni

Prospiciens, et adalta virgo.

Suspiret : Eheu, ne radis agminum

Sponsus laceffit regius asperum

Tactu leonem, quem cruenta

Per medias rapit ira cædes.

*Carm. lib. 3. qde 2.*

Shakespear says \*, “ You may as well go  
“ about to turn the sun to ice by fanning  
“ in his face with a peacock’s father.” The  
peacock’s feather, not to mention the beauty  
of the object, completes the image. An  
accurate image cannot be formed of this  
fanciful operation, without conceiving a  
particular feather ; and the mind is at some  
loss, when this is not specified in the de-

\* Henry V. act 4. sc. 4.

scription.

scription. Again, " The rogues slighted  
" me into the river with as little remorse,  
" as they would have drown'd a bitch's  
" blind puppies, fifteen i' th' litter \*."

*Old Lady.* You would not be a queen?

*Anne.* No not for all the riches under heaven.

*Old Lady.* 'Tis strange: a three-pence bow'd  
would hire me, old as I am, to queen it.

*Henry VIII. act 2. sc. 5.*

In the following passage, the action, with  
all its material circumstances, is represented  
so much to the life, that it could not be  
better conceived by a real spectator; and it  
is this manner of description which contri-  
butes greatly to the sublimity of the passage;

He spake; and to confirm his words, out-flew  
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
Of mighty cherubim: the sudden blaze  
Far round illumin'd hell: highly they rag'd  
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms,

\* Merry Wives of Windsor, act 3. sc. 15.

Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,  
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heav'n.

*Milton, b. 1.*

A passage I am to cite from Shakespear, falls not much short of that now mentioned in particularity of description:

O you hard hearts! you cruel men of Rome!  
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,  
Your infants in your arms; and there have far  
The live-long day with patient expectation  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome,  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
Have you not made an universal shout,  
That Tyber trembled underneath his banks,  
To hear the replication of your sounds,  
Made in his concave shores?

*Julius Caesar, act 1, sc. 1.*

The *Henriade* of Voltaire errs greatly against the foregoing rule: every thing is touched in a summary way, without ever descending to the circumstances of an event. This manner is good in a general history,  
the

the purpose of which is to record important transactions: but in a fable, which hath a very different aim, it is cold and uninteresting; because it is impracticable to form distinct images of persons or things represented in a manner so superficial.

It is observed above, that every useless circumstance ought to be suppressed. To deal in such circumstances, is a fault, on the one hand, not less to be avoided, than the conciseness for which Voltaire is blamed, on the other. In the *Æneid*\*, Barce, the nurse of Sichæus, whom we never hear of before or after, is introduced for a purpose not more important than to call Anna to her sister Dido. And that it might not be thought unjust in Dido, even in this trivial incident, to prefer her husband's nurse before her own, the poet takes care to inform his reader, that Dido's nurse was dead. To this I must oppose a beautiful passage in the same book, where, after Dido's last speech, the poet, supposing her

\* Lib. 4. l. 632.

dead, hastens to describe the lamentation of her attendants :

Dixerat : atque illam media inter talia ferro  
Collapsam aspiciunt comites, ensaque cruore  
Spumantem, sparsasque manus. It clamor ad alta  
Atria, concussam bacchatur fama per urbem ;  
Lamentis gemituque et fœmineo ululatu  
Tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus æther.

*Lib. 4. l. 663.*

As an appendix to the foregoing rule, I add the following observation, That to raise a sudden and strong impression, some single circumstance happily selected, has more power than the most laboured description. Macbeth, mentioning to his lady some voices he heard while he was murdering the King, says,

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cry'd  
Murder !

They wak'd each other ; and I stood and heard  
them ;

But they did say their prayers, and address them  
Again to sleep.

*Lady.* There are two lodg'd together.

*Macbeth.*

*Macbeth.* One cry'd, God bless us! and, Amen!  
the other ;

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands,  
Listening their fear, I could not say, Amen,  
When they did say, God bless us..

*Lady.* Consider it not so deeply.

*Macbeth.* But wherefore could not I pronounce,  
Amen?

I had most need of blessing, and Amen  
Stuck in my throat.

*Lady.* These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

*Macbeth.* Methought, I heard a voice cry,  
Sleep no more!  
Macbeth doth murder sleep, &c.

*Act 2. sc. 3.*

### Describing Prince Henry :

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,  
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,  
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury ;  
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,  
As if an angel dropt down from the clouds,  
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,  
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

*First Part Henry IV. act 4. sc. 2.*

*King*

*King Henry.* Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on  
 heaven's blifs,  
 Hold up thy hand, make fignal of thy hope.  
 He dies, and makes no fign!

*Second Part Henry VI. act 3. fe. 16.*

The fame author, fpeaking ludicrously of  
 an army debilitated with difeafes, fays,

Half of them dare not fhake the fnow from off  
 their caffocks, left they fhake themfelves to pieces.

To draw a character is the mafter-ftroke  
 of defcription. In this Tacitus excels:  
 his figures are natural, diftinct, and com-  
 plete; not a feature wanting or misplaced.  
 Shakespear however exceeds Tacitus in the  
 fprightlinefs of his figures: fome characte-  
 riftical circumftance is generally invented or  
 laid hold of, which paints more to the life  
 than many words. The following instan-  
 ces will explain my meaning, and at the  
 fame time prove my obfervation to be juft.

Why fhould a man, whofe blood is warm within,  
 Sit like his grandfire cut in alabafter?  
 Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice,  
 By being peevifh? I tell that what, Anthonio,

(1



(I love thee, and it is my love that speaks):  
 There are a sort of men, whose villages  
 Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;  
 And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;  
 As who should say, I am Sir Oracle,  
 And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!  
 O my Antonio, I do know of those,  
 That therefore only are reputed wise,  
 For saying nothing.

*Merchant of Venice, act 1, sc. 1.*

Again,

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing,  
 more than any man in all Venice: his reasons are  
 two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff;  
 you shall seek all day ere you find them, and  
 when you have them, they are not worth the search.

*Ibid.*

In the following passage a character is com-  
 pleted by a single stroke.

*Shallow.* O the mad days that I have spent; and  
 to see how many of mine old acquaintance are dead.

*Silence.* We shall all follow, Cousin.

*Shallow.* Certain, 'tis certain, very sure, very  
 sure;

sure; Death (as the Psalmist saith) is certain to all: all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?

*Slender.* Truly, Cousin, I was not there.

*Shallow.* Death is certain. Is old *Double* of your town living yet.

*Silence.* Dead, Sir.

*Shallow.* Dead! see, see; he drew a good bow: and dead? He shot a fine shoot. How a score of ewes now?

*Silence.* Thereafter as they be. A score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

*Shallow.* And is old *Double* dead?

*Second Part Henry IV. act 3. sc. 3.*

Describing a jealous husband:

Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note. There is no hiding you in the house.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, act 4. sc. 3.*

Congreve has an inimitable stroke of this kind in his comedy of *Love for Love*:

*Ben Legend.* Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

*Sir Sampson.* Dick, body o' me, Dick has been dead

dead these two years, I writ you word, when you were at Leghorn.

*Ben.* Mefs, that's true; marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you fay. *Act 3. sc. 6.*

Falstaff speaking of Ancient Pistol,

He's no swaggerer, hostefs; a tame cheater i'faith; you may stroak him as gently as a puppey-greyhound; he will not swagger with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any shew of resistance.

*Second Part Henry IV. act 2. sc. 9.*

Some writers, through heat of imagination, fall into contradictions; some are guilty of downright inconsistencies; and some even rave like madmen. Against such capital errors one cannot be warned to better purpose than by collecting instances. The first shall be of a contradiction, the most venial of all. Virgil speaking of Neptune:

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum  
Emissamque hyemem sensit Neptunus, et imis  
Stagna refusa vadis: *graviter commotus*, et alto  
Prospiciens, summâ *placidum* caput extulit undâ.

*Æneid. i. 128.*

Again,

When first young Maro, in his boundless mind,  
A work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,  
*Essay on Criticism, l. 130.*

The following examples are of downright inconsistencies.

Alii pulsus e tormento catenis discerpti fessique,  
dimidiato corpore pugnabant sibi superstites, ac per-  
emptæ partis ultores. *Strada, Dec. 2. L. 2.*

Il pover huomo, che non sen' era accorto,  
Andava combattendo, ed era morto. *Berni.*

He fled, but flying, left his life behind.  
*Iliad xi. 443.*

Full through his neck the weighty falchion sped:  
Along the pavement roll'd the muttering head.  
*Odyssey xii. 365.*

The last article is of raving like one mad,  
Cleopatra speaking to the aspick ;

——— Welcome, thou kind deceiver,  
Thou best of thieves ; who, with an easy key,  
Do'st open life, and unperceiv'd by us  
Ev'n steal us from ourselves ; discharging fo  
Death's

Death's dreadful office, better than himself,  
 Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,  
 That Death stands by, deceiv'd by his own image,  
 And thinks himself but Sleep.

*Dryden, All for Love, act 5.*

Reasons that are common and known to every person, ought to be taken for granted : to express them is childish and interrupts the narration. Quintus Curtius, relating the battle of Issus :

*Jam in conspectu, sed extra teli jactum, utraque acies erat ; quum priores Persæ inconditum et truncem sustulere clamorem. Redditur et a Macedonibus major, exercitus impar numero, sed jugis montium vastisque saltibus percussus : quippe semper circumjecta nemora petræque, quantamcumque accepere vocem, multiplicato sono referunt.*

Having discussed what observations occurred upon the thoughts or things expressed, I proceed to what more peculiarly concern the language or verbal dress. The language proper for expressing passion is the subject of a former chapter. Several observations there made, are applicable to the present subject ; particularly, That words are

intimately connected with the ideas they represent, and that the representation cannot be perfect unless the emotions raised by the sound and the sense be concordant. It is not sufficient, that the sense be clearly expressed: the words must correspond to the subject in every particular. An elevated subject requires an elevated style: what is familiar, ought to be familiarly expressed: a subject that is serious and important, ought to be clothed in plain nervous language: a description, on the other hand, addressed to the imagination, is susceptible of the highest ornaments that sounding words, metaphor, and figurative expression, can bestow upon it.

I shall give a few examples of the foregoing doctrine. A poet of any genius will not readily dress a high subject in low words; and yet blemishes of this kind are found even in some classical works. Horace observing that men, perfectly satisfied with themselves, are seldom so with their condition, introduces Jupiter indulging to each his own choice:

Jam

Jam, faciam quod vultis : eris tu, qui modo miles,  
 Mercator : tu, consultus modo, rusticus : hinc vos,  
 Vos hinc mutatis discedite partibus : cia,  
 Quid ? statis ? nolint : atqui licet esse beatis.  
 Quid causæ est, merito quin illis Jupiter ambas  
 Iratus buccas inflet ? neque se fore posthac  
 Tam facilem dicat, votis ut præbeat aurem ?

*Serm. lib. 1. sat. 1. l. 16.*

Jupiter in wrath puffing up both cheeks, is  
 a ludicrous expression, far from suitable to  
 the gravity of the subject : every one must  
 feel the discordance. The following couplet,  
 sinking far below the subject, is not less  
 ludicrous.

Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,  
 Yet ne'er looks forward farther than his nose.

*Essay on Man, ep. iv. 223.*

On the other hand, to raise the expression  
 above the tone of the subject, is a fault  
 than which none is more common. Take  
 the following instances.

Orcan le plus fidèle à server ses desseins,  
 Né sous le ciel brûlant des plus noirs Affricains.

*Bajazet, act 3. sc. 8.*

Les

Les ombres par trois fois ont obscurci les cieux  
 Depuis que le sommeil n'est entré dans vos yeux,  
 Et le jour a trois fois chassé la nuit obscure  
 Depuis que votre corps languit sans nourriture.

*Phedra, act 1. sc. 3.*

*Assuerus.* Ce mortel, qui montra tant de zèle  
 pour moi,  
 Vit-il encore ?

*Asaph.* ——— Il voit l'astre qui vous éclaire.

*Esther, act 2. sc. 3.*

Oui, c'est Agamemnon, c'est ton Roi qui t'éveille;  
 Viens, reconnois la voix qui frappe ton oreille.

*Iphigénie.*

————— In the inner room  
 I spy a winking lamp, that weakly strikes  
 The ambient air, scarce kindling into light.

*Soutberne, Fate of Capua, act 3.*

In the funeral orations of the Bishop of  
 Meaux, the following passages are raised  
 far above the tone of the subject.

L'Océan étonné de se voir traversé tant de fois  
 en des appareils si divers, et pour des causes si dif-  
 férentes, &c.

*p. 6.*

Grande



Grande Reine, je satisfais à vos plus tendres desirs, quand je célèbre ce monarque; et ce cœur qui n'a jamais vécu que pour lui, seveille, tout poudre qu'il est, et devient sensible, même sous ce drap mortuaire, au nom d'un époux si cher. A 32.

Montesquieu, in a didactic work, *L'esprit des Loix*, gives too great indulgence to imagination: the tone of his language swells frequently above his subject. I give an example:

Mr le Comte de Boulainvilliers et Mr l'Abbé Dubos ont fait chacun un système, dont l'un semble être une conjuration contre le tiers-etat, et l'autre une conjuration contre la noblesse. Lorsque le Soleil donna à Phaëton son char à conduire, il lui dit: Si vous montez trop haut, vous brûlerez la demeure céleste; si vous descendez trop bas, vous réduirez en cendres la terre: n'allez point trop à droite, vous tomberiez dans la constellation du serpent; n'allez point trop à gauche, vous iriez dans celle de l'autel: tenez-vous entre les deux.

L. ch. 10.

The following passage, intended, one would imagine, as a receipt to boil water, is altogether

gether burlesque by the laboured elevation of the diction.

A massy caldron of stupendous frame  
They brought, and plac'd it o'er the rising flame:  
Then heap the lighted wood; the flame divides  
Beneath the vase, and climbs around the sides:  
In its wide womb they pour the rushing stream:  
The boiling water bubbles to the brim.

*Pope's Homer, book xviii. 405.*

In a passage near the beginning of the 4th book of *Telamachus*, one feels a sudden bound upward without preparation, which accords not with the subject:

Calypso, qui avoit été jusqu'à ce moment immobile et transportée de plaisir en écoutant les aventures de *Télémaque*, l'interrompt pour lui faire prendre quelque repos. Il est tems, lui dit-elle, que vous alliez goûter la douceur du sommeil après tant de travaux. Vous n'avez rien à craindre ici; tout vous est favorable. Abandonnez-vous donc à la joye. Goûtez la paix, et tous les autres dons des dieux dont vous allez être comblé. *Demain, quand l'Aurore avec ses doigts de roses entr'ouvrira les portes dorées de l'Orient, et que les chevaux du soleil sortans de l'onde amère répandront les flammes*

*du jour, peut s'élever devant eux toutes les étoiles  
du ciel, nous reprendrons, mon cher Télémaque,  
l'histoire de vos malheurs.*

This obviously is copied from a similar passage in the *Æneid*, which ought not to have been copied, because it lies open to the same censure: but the force of authority is great.

At regina gravi jamdudum saucia cura,  
Vulnus alit venis, & cæco carpitur igni.  
Multa viri virtus animo, multusque recurſat  
Gentis honos: hærent infixi pectore vultus,  
Verbaque: nec placidam membris dat cura quietem.  
*Postera Phæbea luſtrabat lampade terras,  
Hæmitemque Aurora polo dimoverat umbram;*  
Cum ſit unanimem alloquitur maleſana ſororem:

*Lib. iv. 1.*

Take another example where the words rise above the subject:

Ainsi les peuples y accoururent bientôt en foule  
de toutes parts; le commerce de cette ville étoit  
semblable au flux et reflux de la mer. Les trésors  
y entroient comme les flots viennent l'un sur l'autre.  
Tout y étoit apporté et en sortoit librement: tout

ce qui y entroit, étoit utile; toute ce qui en sortoit, laissoit en sortant d'autres richesses en sa place. La justice sévère présidoit dans le port au milieu de tant de nations. La franchise, la bonne-foi, la candeur, sembloient du haut de ces superbes tours appeler les marchands des terres les plus éloignées; chacun des ces marchands, soit qu'il vint des rivages orientales où le soleil sort chaque jour du sein des ondes, soit qu'il fût parti de cette grande mer où le soleil assés de son cours va éteindre ses feux, vivoit paisible et en sûreté dans Salente comme dans sa patrie!

*Telemaque, l. 12.*

The language of Homer is suited to his subject, not less accurately than the actions and sentiments of his heroes are to their characters. Virgil, in this particular, falls short of perfection: his language is stately throughout; and though he descends at times to the simplest branches of cookery, roasting and boiling for example, yet he never relaxes a moment from the high tone \*. In adjusting his language to his subject, no writer equals Swift. I can recollect but one exception, which at the same time is far

\* See *Æneid*. lib. i. 188.—219.

from

from being gross. The journal of a modern lady, is composed in a style where sprightliness is blended with familiarity, perfectly suited to the subject. In one passage, however, the poet assumes a higher tone, which corresponds neither to the subject nor to the tone of language employ'd in the rest of that piece. The passage I have in view begins *l.* 116. "But let me now a  
" while survey," &c. and ends at *l.* 135.

It is proper to be observed upon this head, that writers of inferior rank are continually upon the stretch to enliven and enforce their subject by exaggeration and superlatives. This unluckily has an effect opposite to what is intended: the reader, disgusted with language that swells above the subject, is led by contrast to think more meanly of the subject than it may possibly deserve. A man of prudence, beside, will be not less careful to husband his strength in writing than in walking: a writer too liberal of superlatives, exhausts his whole stock upon ordinary incidents, and reserves no share to

express, with greater energy, matters of importance \*.

The power that language possesses to imitate thought, goes farther than to the capital circumstances above mentioned: it reacheth even the slighter modifications. Slow action, for example, is imitated by words pronounced slow; labour or toil, by words harsh or rough in their sound. But this subject has been already handled †.

In dialogue-writing, the condition of the speaker is chiefly to be regarded in framing the expression. The centinel in *Hamlet*, interrogated about the ghost, whether his watch had been quiet? answers with great

\* Montaigne, reflecting upon the then present modes, observes, that there never was at any other time so abject and servile prostitution of words in the addresses made by people of fashion to one another; the humblest tenders of life and soul, no professions under that of devotion and adoration; the writer constantly declaring himself a vassal, nay a slave: so that when any more serious occasion of friendship or gratitude requires more genuine professions, words are wanting to express them.

† Ch. 18. sect. 2.

propriety

propriety for a man in his station, "Not a  
" mouse stirring \*."

I proceed to a second remark, not less important than the former. No person of reflection but must be sensible, that an incident makes a stronger impression on an eye-witness, than when heard at second hand. Writers of genius, sensible that the eye is the best avenue to the heart, represent every thing as passing in our sight; and from readers or hearers, transform us, as it were, into spectators. A skilful writer conceals himself, and presents his personages. In a word, every thing becomes dramatic as much as possible. Plutarch, *de gloria Atheniensium*, observes, that Thucydides makes his reader a spectator, and inspires him with the same passions as if he were an eye-witness. I am intitled to

\* One can scarce avoid smiling at the blindness of a certain critic, who, with an air of self-sufficiency, condemns this expression as low and vulgar. A French poet, says he, would express the same thought in a more sublime manner: "Mais tout dort, et l'armée, et les vents, et Neptune." And he adds, "The English poet may please at London, but 'the French every where else."

make

make the same observation upon our countryman Swift. From this happy talent arises that energy of style which is peculiar to him: he cannot always avoid narration; but the pencil is his choice, by which he bestows life and colouring upon his objects, Pope is richer in ornament, but possesses not in the same degree the talent of drawing from the life. A translation of the sixth satire of Horace, begun by the former and finished by the latter, affords the fairest opportunity for a comparison. Pope obviously imitates the picturesque manner of his friend: yet every one of taste must be sensible, that the imitation, though fine, falls short of the original. In other instances, where Pope writes in his own style, the difference of manner is still more conspicuous.

Abstract or general terms have no good effect in any composition for amusement; because it is only of particular objects that images can be formed\*. Shakspeare's style in that respect is excellent. Every article

\* See chap. 4.



in his descriptions is particular, as in nature; and if accidentally a vague expression slip in, the blemish is extremely discernible by the bluntness of its impression. Take the following example. Falstaff, excusing himself for running away at a robbery, says,

By the Lord, I knew ye, as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters; was it for me to kill the bear-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest, I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct, the lion will not touch the true prince: instinct is a great matter. I was a coward on instinct: I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life; I, for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Harkess, clap to the doors; watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? shall we have a play *extempore*?

*First Part Henry IV. act 2. sc. 9.*

The particular words I object to are, *instinct is a great matter*, which make but a poor figure, compared with the liveliness of

of the rest of the speech. It was one of Homer's advantages, that he wrote before general terms were multiplied: the superior genius of Shakespear displays itself in avoiding them after they were multiplied. Addison describes the family of Sir Roger de Coverley in the following words.

You would take his valet de chambre for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy counsellor.

*Spectator, No. 105.*

The description of the groom is less lively than of the others; plainly because the expression, being vague and general, tends not to form any image. "*Dives opum variatum*," is an expression still more vague; and so are the following.

---

Mæcenâs, mearum  
Grande decus, columenque rerum.

*Horat. Carm. l. 2. ode 17.*

\* *Georg. l. 2. 488.*

—et

— et fide Tela

Dices laborantes in uno

Penelopen, vitreamque Circen.

*Horat. Carm. l. 1. ode 17.*

In the fine arts, it is a rule, to put the capital objects in the strongest point of view; and even to present them oftener than once, where it can be done. In history-painting, the principal figure is placed in the front, and in the best light: an equestrian statue is placed in a centre of streets, that it may be seen from many places at once. In no composition is there a greater opportunity for this rule than in writing :

— Sequitur pulcherrimus Astur,  
Astur equo fidens et versicoloribus armis.

*Æneid. x. 180.*

— Full many a lady

I've ey'd with best regard, and many a time

Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage

Brought my too diligent ear, for several virtues

Have I lik'd several women, never any

With so full soul, but some defect in her

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she ow'd,

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And

And put it to the foil. But you, O you, —  
 So perfect, and so peerless, are created  
 Of every creature's best.

*The Tempest, act 3. sc. 1.*

With thee conversing I forget all time;  
 All seasons and their change, all please alike.  
 Sweet is the breath of morn; her rising sweet,  
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,  
 When first on this delightful land he spreads  
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
 Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile earth  
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming on  
 Of grateful evening mild, the silent night  
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
 And these the gems of heav'n, her starry train:  
 But neither breath of morn, when she ascends  
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun  
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,  
 Glistering with dew, nor fragrance after showers,  
 Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,  
 With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,  
 Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.

*Paradise Lost, book 4. l. 534.*

What mean ye, that ye use this proverb, The  
 fathers have eaten four grapes, and the childrens  
 teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord  
 God,

God, ye shall not have occasion to use this proverb in Israel. If a man keep my judgements to deal truly, he is just, he shall surely live. But if he be a robber, a shedder of blood; if he have eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife; if he have oppressed the poor and needy, have spoiled by violence, have not restored the pledge, have lift up his eyes to idols, have given forth upon usury, and have taken increase: shall he live? he shall not live: he shall surely die; and his blood shall be upon him. Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins, and considereth, and doth not such like; that hath not eaten upon the mountains, hath not lift up his eyes to idols, nor defiled his neighbour's wife, hath not oppressed any nor with-held the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment; that hath not received usury nor increase, that hath executed my judgments, and walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Have I any pleasure that the wicked should die? saith the Lord

..

God; and not that he should return from his ways and live. *Exekiel xxi.*

The repetitions in Homer, which are frequent, have been the occasion of much criticism. Suppose we were at a loss about the reason, might not taste be sufficient to justify them? At the same time, one must be devoid of understanding not to be sensible, that they make the narration dramatic; and give an air of truth, by making things appear as passing in our sight.

A concise comprehensive style is a great ornament in narration; and a superfluity of unnecessary words, not less than of circumstances, a great nuisance. A judicious selection of the striking circumstances, clothed in a nervous style, is delightful. In this style, Tacitus excels all writers, ancient and modern. Instances are numberless: take the following specimen.

Crebra hinc praelia, et sæpius in modum latrocinii: per saltus, per paludes; ut cuique fors aut virtus: temere, proviso, ob iram, ob prædam, justu, et aliquando ignaris ducibus.

*Annal. lib. 12. § 39.*

If

If a concise or nervous style be a beauty, tautology must be a blemish. And yet writers, fettered by verse, are not sufficiently careful to avoid this slovenly practice: they may be pitied, but they cannot be justified. Take for a specimen the following instances, from the best poet, for versification at least, that England has to boast of:

High on his helm celestial lightnings play,  
His beamy shield emits a living ray,  
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,  
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

*Iliad v. 5.*

Strength and omnipotence invest thy throne.

*Iliad viii. 576.*

So silent fountains, from a rock's tall head,  
In fabled streams soft-trickling waters shed.

*Iliad ix. 19.*

His clanging armour rung.

*Iliad xii. 94.*

Fear on their cheek, and horror in their eye.

*Iliad xv. 4.*

The

The blaze of armour flash'd against the day.

*Iliad xvi. 786.*

As when the piercing blasts of Boreas blow.

*Iliad xix. 380.*

And like the moon, the broad refulgent shield  
Blaz'd with long rays, and gleam'd athwart the  
field.

*Iliad xix. 402.*

No — could our swiftness o'er the winds prevail,  
Or beat the pinions of the western gale,

All were in vain ———

*Iliad xix. 460.*

The humid sweat from ev'ry pore descends.

*Iliad xxiii. 829.*

Redundant epithets, such as *humid*, in the last citation, are by Quintilian disallowed to orators, but indulged to poets\*; because his favourite poets, in a few instances, are reduced to such epithets for the sake of versification. For instance, *Prata canis albicant pruinis*, of Horace, and *liquidos fontes*, of Virgil.

As an apology for such careless expressions, it may well suffice, that Pope, in

\* Lib. 8. cap. 6. § 2.



submitting to be a translator, acts below his genius. In a translation, it is hard to require the same spirit or accuracy, that is cheerfully bestowed on an original work. And to support the reputation of this author, I shall give some instances from Virgil and Horace, more faulty by redundancy than any of those above mentioned.

Sæpe etiam immensum cœlo venit agmen aquarum,  
Et foedam glomerant tempestatem imbris atris  
Collectæ ex alto nubes: ruit arduus æther,  
Et pluvîâ ingenti sata læta, boumque labores  
Diluit. *Georg. lib. i. 322.*

Postquam altum tenere rates, nec jam amplius  
ullæ

Apparent terræ; cœlum undique et undique pon-  
tus:

Tum mihi cœruleus supra caput affixit imber,  
Noctem hyememque ferens: et inhorruit unda tē-  
nebris. *Æneid. lib. iii. 191.*

---

Hinc tibi copia

Manabit ad plenum benigno

Ruris honorum opulenta cornu.

*Horat. Carm. lib. 1. ode 17.*

Videre

Videre fessis vomerem inversum boves  
Collo trahentes languido.

*Horat. Epod. ii. 63.*

Here I can luckily apply Horace's rule against himself:

Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se  
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.

*Serm. lib. i. sat. x. 9.*

I close this chapter with a curious inquiry. An object, however ugly to the sight, is far from being so when represented by colours or by words. What is the cause of this difference? The cause with respect to painting is obvious. A good picture, whatever the subject be, is agreeable, because of the pleasure we take in imitation: the agreeableness of imitation overbalances the disagreeableness of the subject; and the picture upon the whole is agreeable. It requires a greater compass to explain the cause with respect to the description of an ugly object. To connect individuals in the social state, no one particular contributes more than language, by the power it possesses

possesses of an expeditious communication of thought and a lively representation of transactions. But nature hath not been satisfied to recommend language by its utility merely: it is made susceptible of many beauties that have no relation to utility, which are directly felt without the intervention of any reflection\*. And this unfolds the mystery; for the pleasure of language is so great, as in a lively description to overbalance the disagreeableness of the image raised by it†. This however is no encouragement to deal in disagreeable subjects; for the pleasure is out of sight greater where the subject and the description are both of them agreeable.

The following description is upon the whole agreeable, though the subject described is in itself dismal.

Nine times the space that measures day and night:  
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquish'd, rowling in the fiery gulf  
Confounded though immortal: but his doom

\* See chap. 18.

† See chap. 2. part 4.

Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought  
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,  
 That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,  
 Mix'd with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:  
 At once as far as angels ken he views  
 The dismal situation waste and wild:  
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
 As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames  
 No light, but rather darkness visible  
 Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,  
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
 That comes to all; but torture without end  
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd:  
 Such place eternal justice had prepar'd  
 For those rebellious,

*Paradise Lost, book 1, l. 50.*

An unmanly depression of spirits in time of  
 danger is not an agreeable sight; and yet a  
 fine description or representation of it will  
 be relished:

*K. Richard.* What must the King do now? must  
 he submit?  
 The King shall do it: must he be depos'd?

The

The King shall be contented : must he lose  
 The name of King ? O' God's name, let it go :  
 I'll give my jewels for a set of beads ;  
 My gorgeous palace, for a hermitage ;  
 My gay apparel, for an almsman's gown ;  
 My figur'd goblets, for a dish of wood ;  
 My sceptre, for a palmer's walking staff ;  
 My subjects, for a pair of carved saints ;  
 And my large kingdom, for a little grave ;  
 A little, little grave ;—— an obscure grave.  
 Or I'll be bury'd in the King's highway ;  
 Some way of common tread, where subjects feet  
 May hourly trample on their sovereign's head :  
 For on my heart they tread now, whilst I live ;  
 And, bury'd once, why not upon my head ?

*Richard II. act 3. sc. 6.*

Objects that strike terror in a spectator,  
 have in poetry and painting a fine effect.  
 The picture, by raising a slight emotion of  
 terror, agitates the mind ; and in that con-  
 dition every beauty makes a deep impresson.  
 May not contrast heighten the pleasure, by  
 opposing our present security to the danger  
 we would be in by encountering the ob-  
 ject represented ?

————— The other shape,  
 If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none  
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
 Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,  
 For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,  
 Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,  
 And shook a dreadful dart.

*Paradise Lost, book 2. l. 666.*

————— Now storming fury rose,  
 And clamour such as heard in heav'n till now  
 Was never, arms on armour clashing bray'd  
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
 Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
 Of conflict; over-head the dismal hiss,  
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
 And flying vaulted either host with fire.  
 So under fiery cope together rush'd  
 Both battles main, with ruinous assault  
 And inextinguishable rage; all heav'n  
 Resounded, and had earth been then, all earth  
 Had to her centre shook.

*Paradise Lost, book 6. l. 207.*

*Ghost.* ————— But that I am forbid  
 To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word  
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
 Make

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their  
spheres,

Thy knotty and combined locks to part,

And each particular hair to stand on end

Like quills upon the fretful porcupine :

But this eternal blazon must not be

To ears of flesh and blood.

*Hamlet, act 1. sc. 8.*

*Gratiano.* Poor Desdemona ! I'm glad thy father's dead :

Thy match was mortal to him; and pure grief

Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,

This sight would make him do a desp'rate turn :

Yea, curse his better angel from his side,

And fall to reprobation.

*Othello, act 5. sc. 8.*

Objects of horror must be excepted from the foregoing theory; for no description, however masterly, is sufficient to overbalance the disgust raised even by the idea of such an object. Every thing horrible ought therefore to be avoided in a description. Nor is this a severe law: the poet will avoid such scenes for his own sake, as well as for that of his reader; and to vary his descriptions, nature affords plenty of objects that disgust

us in some degree without raising horror. I am obliged therefore to condemn the picture of sin in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, though drawn with a masterly hand. The original would be a horrible spectacle, and the horror is not much softened in the copy.

---

Penſive here I ſat  
 Alone, but long I ſat not, till my womb  
 Pregnant by thee, and now exceſſive grown  
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.  
 At laſt this odious offspring whom thou ſeeſt,  
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,  
 Tore through my intrails, that with fear and pain  
 Diſtorted, all my nether ſhape thus grew  
 Transform'd; but he my inbred enemy  
 Forth iſſu'd, brandiſhing his fatal dart,  
 Made to deſtroy: I fled, and cry'd out Death;  
 Hell trembl'd at the hideous name, and ſigh'd  
 From all her caves, and back reſounded Death.  
 I fled, but he purſu'd, (though more, it ſeems,  
 Inflam'd with luſt than rage), and ſwifter far,  
 Me overtook, his mother all diſmay'd,  
 And in embraces forcible and foul  
 Ingendring with me, of that rape begot  
 Theſe yelling monſters that with ceaſeleſs cry  
 Surround me, as thou ſaw'ſt, hourly conceiv'd  
 And



And hourly born, with sorrow infinite:  
 To me; for when they list, into the womb  
 That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw  
 My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth  
 A fresh with conscious terrors vex me round,  
 That rest or intermission none I find.  
 Before mine eyes in opposition sits  
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,  
 And me his parent would full soon devour  
 For want of other prey, but that he knows  
 His end with mine involv'd; and knows that I  
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,  
 Whenever that shall be. *Book 2. l. 777.*

Iago's character in the tragedy of *Othello*, is so monstrous and satanical, as not to be sufferable in a representation: not even Shakespeare's masterly hand can make the picture agreeable.

Though the objects introduced in the following scenes, are not altogether so horrible as Sin is in Milton's picture; yet with every person of taste, disgust will be the prevailing emotion.

— Strophades Graio stant nomine dictæ  
 Insulæ Ionio in magno: quas dira Celæno,  
 Harpyiæque

Harpyiæque colunt aliæ : Phineia postquam  
Clausa domus, mentasque metu liquere priores.  
Tristius haud illis monstrum, nec sævior ulla  
Pestis et ira Deum Stygiis sese extulit undis.  
Virginei volucrum vultus, foedissima ventris  
Proluvies, uncæque manus, et pallida semper.  
Ora fame.

Huc ubi delati portus intravimus : ecce  
Læta bouum passim campis armenta videmus,  
Caprigenumque pecus, nullo custode, per herbas.  
Irruimus ferro, et Divos ipsumque vocamus  
In prædam partemque Jovem : tunc littore curvo  
Extruimusque toros, dapibusque epulamur opimis.  
At subitæ horrifico lapsu de montibus adsunt  
Harpyiæ : et magnis quatiunt clangoribus alas :  
Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia foedant  
Immundo : tum vox tetrum dira inter odorem.

*Æneid. lib. iii. 210.*

Sum patria ex Ithaca, comes infelicis Ulyssæi,  
Nomen Achemenides : Trojam, genitore Adamasto  
Paupere (mansissetque utinam fortuna !) profectus.  
Hic me, dum trepidi crudelia limina linqunt,  
Immemores focii vasto Cyclopi in antro  
Deseruere. Domus sanie dapibusque cruentis,  
Intus opaca, ingens : ipse arduus, altaque pulsat  
Sidera : (Dii, talem terris avertite pestem)  
Nec visu facilis, nec dictu affabilis ulli.  
Visceribus miserorum, et sanguine vescitur atro.

Vidi

Vidi egomet, duo de numero cum corpora nostro,  
Prensa manu magna, medio resupinus in antro,  
Frangeret ad saxum, sanieque aspersa natarent  
Limina : vidi, atro cum membra fluentia tabo  
Manderet, et tepidi tremerent sub dentibus artus.  
Haud impune quidem : nec talia passus Ulysses,  
Oblitusve sui est Ithacus discrimine tanto.  
Nam simul expletus dapibus, vinoque sepultus  
Cervicem inflexam posuit, jacuitque per antrum  
Immensus, saniem eructans, ac frustra cruento  
Per somnū commixta mero ; nos, magna precati  
Numina, fortitque vices, unā undique circum  
Fundimur, et telo lumen terebramus acuto  
Ingens, quod torva solum sub fronte latebat.

*Æneid. lib. iii. 613.*

## C H A P. XXII.

## Epic and Dramatic Compositions.

**T**RAGEDY differs from the epic more in form than in substance. The ends proposed by each are instruction and amusement; and each of them copy human actions as means to bring about these ends. They differ in the manner only of copying. Epic poetry deals in narration: Tragedy represents its facts as transacted in our sight. In the former, the poet introduces himself as an historian: in the latter he presents his actors and never himself \*.

This

\* The dialogue in a dramatic composition separates it so clearly from other compositions, that no writer has thought it necessary to search for any other distinguishing mark. But much useless labour has been bestowed, to distinguish an epic poem by some such mark. Bossu defines this poem to be, "A composition in verse, intended to form the manners by in-  
structions

## Ch. XXII. EPIC AND DRAMATIC, &c. 219

This difference, regarding form only, may be thought slight; but the effects it occasions, are by no means so. What we see, makes a stronger impression than what we learn from others. A narrative poem is a story told by another: facts and incidents passing upon the stage, come under our own observation; and are beside much enlivened by action and gesture, expressive of many sentiments beyond the reach of language

“structions disguised under the allegories of an important action,” which will exclude every epic poem founded upon real facts, and perhaps include several of Esop’s fables. Voltaire reckons verse so essential, as for that single reason to exclude the adventures of Telemachus. See his *Essay upon Epic Poetry*. Others, affected with substance more than with ornament, hesitate not to pronounce that poem to be epic. It is not a little diverting, to see so many shallow critics hunting for what is not to be found. They always take for granted, without the least foundation, that there must be some precise criterion to distinguish epic poetry from every other species of writing. Literary compositions run into each other, precisely like colours: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but are susceptible of so much variety, and take on so many different forms, that we never can say where one species ends and another begins. As to the general taste, there is little reason to doubt, that a work where heroic actions are related in an elevated style, will, without further requisite, be deemed an epic poem.

A dramatic composition has another property, independent altogether of action. A dialogue makes a deeper impression than a narration : because in the former persons express their own sentiments ; whereas in the latter sentiments are related at second hand. For that reason, Aristotle, the father of critics, lays it down as a rule, That in an epic poem the author ought to take every opportunity to introduce his actors, and to confine the narrative part within the narrowest bounds \*. Homer understood perfectly the advantage of this method ; and his poems are both of them in a great measure dramatic. Lucan runs to the opposite extreme ; and is guilty of a still greater fault : the *Pharsalia* is stuffed with cold and languid reflections ; the merit of which the author assumes to himself, and deigns not to share with his personages. Nothing can be more impertinent, than a chain of such reflections, which suspend the battle of *Pharsalia* after the leaders had made their speech-

\* Pœt. ch. 25. sect. 6.

es, and the two armies are ready to engage \*.

Aristotle, from the nature of the fable, divides tragedy into simple and complex. But it is of greater moment, with respect to dramatic as well as epic poetry, to found a distinction upon the different ends attained by such compositions. A poem, whether dramatic or epic, that hath no tendency beyond moving the passions and exhibiting pictures of virtue and vice, may be distinguished by the name of *pathetic*. But where a story is purposely contrived to illustrate some important lesson of morality, by showing the natural connection betwixt disorderly passions and external misfortunes, such composition may be denominated *moral* †. It indeed conveys moral instruction

\* Lib. 7. from line 385. to line 460.

† The same distinction is applicable to that sort of fable which is said to be the invention of Æsop. A moral, it is true, is by all critics considered as essential to such a fable. But nothing is more common, than to be led blindly by authority. Of the numerous collections I have seen, the fables that clearly inculcate a moral, make a very small part. In many fables, indeed, proper pictures of virtue and vice are exhibited: but  
the

tion with a perspicuity that is not exceeded by the most accurate reasoning; and makes a deeper impression than any moral discourse can do. To be satisfied of this, we need but reflect, that a man whose affections are justly balanced, hath a better chance to escape misfortunes, than one who is a slave to every passion. Indeed, nothing is more evident, than the natural connection that vice hath with misery, and virtue with happiness; and such connection may be illustrated, by stating a fact as well as by urging an argument. Let us assume, for example, the following moral truths, That discord among the chiefs, renders ineffectual all common measures; and that the consequences of a slightly-founded quarrel, fostered by pride and arrogance, are not less fatal than those of the grossest injury. These truths may be inculcated, by the quarrel betwixt Agamemnon and Achilles at the siege of Troy. In this view, it ought to be the poet's chief aim, to invent proper cir-

the bulk of these collections convey no instruction, nor afford any amusement beyond what a child receives in reading an ordinary story.

cumstances,



cumstances, presenting to our view the natural consequences of such discord. These circumstances must seem to arise in the common course of human affairs : no accidental or unaccountable event ought to be indulged ; for the necessary or probable connection betwixt vice and misery, is learned from no events but what are governed by the characters and passions of the persons represented. A real event of which we see no cause, may be a lesson to us ; because what hath happened may again happen : but this cannot be inferred from a story that is known to be fictitious.

Many are the good effects of such compositions. A pathetic composition, whether epic or dramatic, tends to a habit of virtue, by exciting emotions that produce good actions, and avert us from those that are vicious or irregular \*. It likewise, by its frequent pictures of human woes, humanizes the mind, and fortifies us in bearing our own misfortunes. A moral composition must obviously produce the same good effects, because by being moral it doth

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 3.

not cease to be pathetic. It enjoys beside an excellence peculiar to itself: for it not only improves the heart, as above mentioned, but instructs the head by the moral it contains. For my part, I cannot imagine any entertainment more suited to a rational being, than a work thus happily illustrating some moral truth; where a number of persons of different characters are engaged in an important action, some retarding, others promoting, the great catastrophe; and where there is dignity of style as well as of matter. A work of this kind, has our sympathy at command, and can put in motion the whole train of the social affections. We have at the same time great mental enjoyment, in perceiving every event and every subordinate incident connected with its proper cause. Our curiosity is by turns excited and gratified; and our delight is consummated at the close, upon finding, from the characters and situations exhibited at the commencement, that every circumstance down to the final catastrophe is natural, and that the whole in conjunction make a regular chain of causes and effects.

Considering

Considering an epic and dramatic poem as the same in substance, and having the same aim or end, it might be thought that they are equally fitted for the same subjects. But considering their difference as to form, there will be found reason to correct that thought, at least in some degree. Many subjects may indeed be treated with equal advantage in either form; but the subjects are still more numerous for which one of the forms is better qualified than the other; and there are subjects proper for the one and not for the other. To give some slight notion of the difference, as there is no room here for enlarging upon every article, I observe, that dialogue is better qualified for expressing sentiments, and narrative for displaying facts. These peculiarities tend to confine each within certain limits. Heroism, magnanimity, undaunted courage, and the whole tribe of the elevated virtues, figure best in action: tender passions and the whole tribe of sympathetic affections, figure best in sentiment. What we feel is the most remarkable in the latter: what we perform is the most remarkable in the

former. It clearly follows, that tender passions are more peculiarly the province of tragedy, grand and heroic actions of epic poetry \*.

I have no occasion to say more upon the epic, considered as peculiarly adapted to certain subjects. But as dramatic subjects are more complex, I must take a narrower view of them; which I do the more willingly, in order to clear a point thrown into great obscurity by critics.

In the chapter of emotions and passions †, it is occasionally shown, that the subject best fitted for tragedy is the story of a man who has himself been the cause of his misfortune. But this man must neither be deeply guilty nor altogether innocent. The misfortune must be occasioned by a fault incident to human nature, and therefore venial. Misfortunes of this kind, call forth the whole force of the social affections, and

\* In Racine, tender sentiments prevail; in Corneille, grand and heroic manners. Hence clearly the preference of the former before the latter, as dramatic poets. Corneille would figure better in an heroic poem,

† Part 4.

interest the spectator in the warmest manner. An accidental misfortune, if not extremely singular, doth not greatly move our pity. The person who suffers, being innocent, is freed from the greatest of all torments, *viz.* the anguish of mind occasioned by remorse :

Poco é funesta  
 Laltrui fortuna,  
 Quando non resta  
 Ragione alcuna  
 Ne di pentirsi, né darrossir. *Metastasio.*

A criminal, on the other hand, who brings misfortunes upon himself, excites little pity; for a different reason. His remorse, it is true, aggravates his distress, and swells the first emotions of pity : but then our hatred to the criminal blending with pity, blunts its edge considerably. Misfortunes that are not innocent nor highly criminal, partake the advantages of each extreme : they are attended with remorse to embitter the distress, which raises our pity to a great height ; and the slight indignation we have at a venial fault, detracts not sen-

sibly from our pity. For this reason, the happiest of all subjects for tragedy, if such a one could be invented, would be where a man of integrity falls into a great misfortune by doing an innocent action, but which by some singular means he conceives to be criminal. His remorse aggravates his distress; and our compassion, unrestrained by indignation, rises to its highest pitch. Pity comes thus to be the ruling passion of a pathetic tragedy; and by proper representation, may be raised to a height scarce exceeded by any thing felt in real life. A moral tragedy takes in a larger field; for, beside exercising our pity, it raises another passion, selfish indeed, but which deserves to be cherished equally with the social affections. When a misfortune is the natural consequence of some wrong bias in the temper, every spectator who is conscious of some such defect in himself, takes the alarm, and considers that he is liable to the same misfortune. This consideration raises in him an emotion of fear or terror; and it is by this emotion, frequently reiterated in a variety of moral tragedies, that the spectators

spectators are put upon their guard against the disorders of passion.

The commentators upon Aristotle and other critics, have been much graveled about the account given of tragedy by this author, "That by means of pity and terror " it refines in us all sorts of passion." But no one who has a clear conception of the end and effects of a good tragedy, can have any difficulty about Aristotle's meaning. Our pity is engaged for the persons represented, and our terror is upon our own account. Pity indeed is here made to stand for all the sympathetic emotions, because of these it is the capital. There can be no doubt, that our sympathetic emotions are refined or improved by daily exercise; and in what manner our other passions are refined by terror I have just now said. One thing is certain, that no other meaning can justly be given to the foregoing doctrine than that now mentioned; and that it was really Aristotle's meaning, appears from his 13th chapter, where he delivers several propositions agreeable to the doctrine as here explained. These, at the same time, I the rather chuse

to

to mention; because, so far as authority can go, they confirm the foregoing reasoning about the proper subjects for tragedy. His first proposition is, That it being the province of tragedy to excite pity and terror, an innocent person falling into adversity ought never to be the subject. This proposition is a necessary consequence of his doctrine as explained: a subject of this nature may indeed excite pity and terror; but the former in an inferior degree, and the latter in no degree for moral instruction. The second proposition is, That we must not represent a wicked person emerging from misery to good fortune. This excites neither terror nor compassion, nor is agreeable in any respect. The third is, That the misfortunes of a wicked person ought not to be represented. Such representation may be agreeable in some measure upon a principle of justice: but it will not move our pity; or any degree of terror, except in those of the same vicious disposition with the person represented. His last proposition is, That the only character fit for representation



representation lies in the middle, neither eminently good nor eminently bad ; where the misfortune is not the effect of deliberate vice, but of some involuntary fault, as our author expresses it \*. The only objection I find to Aristotle's account of tragedy, is, that he confines it within too narrow bounds, by refusing admittance to the pathetic kind. For if terror be essential to tragedy, no representation deserves that name, but where the misfortunes exhibited are caused by a wrong balance of mind, or some disorder in the internal constitution. Such misfortunes always suggest moral instruction ; and by such misfortunes only can terror be excited for our improvement.

Thus Aristotle's four propositions above mentioned, relate solely to tragedies of the moral kind. Those of the pathetic kind, are not confined within so narrow limits. Subjects fitted for the theatre, are not in such plenty, as to make us reject innocent

\* If one can be amused with a grave discourse which promiset much and performs nothing, he may see this subject treated by Brumoy in his *Theatre Grec*. Preliminary discourse on the origin of tragedy.

misfortunes which rouse our sympathy, though they inculcate no moral. With respect to subjects of this kind, it may indeed be a doubtful question, whether the conclusion ought not always to be happy. Where a person of integrity is represented as suffering to the end under misfortunes purely accidental, we depart discontented, and with some obscure sense of injustice; for seldom is man so submissive to the course of Providence, as not to revolt against the tyranny and vexations of blind chance: he will be inclined to say, This ought not to be. I give for an example the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespear, where the fatal catastrophe is occasioned by Friar Laurence's coming to the monument a minute too late. Such a story we think of with regret: we are vexed at the unlucky chance, and go away dissatisfied. This is a temper of mind which ought not to be cherished; and for that reason, I vote for excluding stories of this kind from the theatre. The misfortunes of a virtuous person arising from necessary causes, or from a chain of unavoidable circumstances, will, I am apt to think,

be

be considered in a different light. Chance affords always a gloomy prospect, and in every instance gives an impression of anarchy and misrule. A regular chain, on the other hand, of causes and effects, directed by the general laws of nature, never fails to suggest the hand of Providence; to which we submit without resentment, being conscious that submission is our duty\*. For that reason, we are not dissatisfied with the distresses of Voltaire's *Mariamne*, though redoubled on her till the moment of her death, without the least fault or failing on her part. Her misfortunes are owing to a cause extremely natural, and not unfrequent, the jealousy of a barbarous husband. The fate of Desdemona in the *Moor of Venice*, affects us in the same manner. We are not so easily reconciled to the fate of Cordelia in *King Lear*; the causes of her misfortune, are by no means so evident, as to exclude the gloomy notion of chance. In short, it appears, that a perfect character suffering under misfortunes is qualified

\* See essays on the principles of morality, edit. 2. p. 291.

for being the subject of a pathetic tragedy, provided chance be excluded. Nor is it altogether inconsistent with a moral tragedy : it may successfully be introduced as an under-part, supposing the chief place to be filled with an imperfect character from which a moral can be drawn. This is the case of Desdemona and Mariamne just now mentioned ; and it is the case of Monimia and Belvidera, in Otway's two tragedies, *The Orphan*, and *Venice preserv'd*.

I had an early opportunity to unfold a curious doctrine, That fable operates on our passions, by representing its events as passing in our sight, and by deluding us into a conviction of reality\*. Hence, in epic and dramatic compositions, it is of importance to employ every means that may promote the delusion, such as the borrowing from history some noted event, with the addition of circumstances that may answer the author's purpose. The principal facts are known to be true ; and we are disposed to extend our belief to every circumstance,

\* Chap. 2. part 1. sect. 6.

But in chusing a subject that makes a figure in history, greater precaution is necessary than where the whole is invented. In the first place, no circumstances must be added, but such as connect naturally with what are known to be true : history may be supplied, but it must not be contradicted. In the next place, a pure fable, entirely new with respect to the persons as well as the incidents, may be supposed an ancient or a modern story. But if the poet build upon truth, the subject he chuses must be distant in time, or at least in place ; for he ought by all means to avoid the familiarity of persons and events nearly connected with us. Familiarity ought more especially to be avoided in an epic poem, the peculiar character of which is dignity and elevation. Modern manners make but a poor figure in such a poem \*.

After

\* I would not from this observation be thought to undervalue modern manners. The roughness, plainness, and impetuosity of ancient manners, may show better in an epic poem, without being better fitted for society. But without regard to this circumstance, it is the familiarity of modern manners that

After Voltaire, no writer, it is probable, will think of erecting an epic poem upon a recent event in the history of his own country. But an event of this kind is perhaps not altogether unqualified for tragedy. It was admitted in Greece, and Shakespear has employ'd it successfully in several of his pieces. One advantage it possesses above fiction, that of more readily engaging our belief, which tends above any other particular to raise our sympathy. The scene of comedy is generally laid at home: familiarity is no objection; and we are peculiarly sensible of the ridicule of our own manners.

After a proper subject is chosen, there appears to me some delicacy in dividing it into parts. The conclusion of a book in an epic poem, or of an act in a play, cannot be altogether arbitrary; nor be intended for so slight a purpose as to make the parts of equal length. The supposed pause at the end of every book, and the real pause at the end of every act, ought always to coincide with some pause in the action. In this re-

unqualifies them for a lofty subject. The dignity of our present manners, will be better understood in future ages when they have become ancient.

spect,

spect, a dramatic or epic poem, ought to resemble a sentence or period in language, divided into members that are distinguished from each other by regular pauses: or it ought to resemble a piece of music, having a full close at the end, preceded by imperfect closes that contribute to the melody. Every act therefore ought to close with some incident that makes a pause in the action; for otherwise there can be no pretext for interrupting the representation. It would be absurd to break off in the very heat of action: against this every one would exclaim. The absurdity still remains, though the action relents, if it be not actually suspended for some time. This rule is also applicable to an epic poem; though there a deviation from the rule is less remarkable, because it is in the reader's power to hide the absurdity, by proceeding instantly to another book. The first book of the *Paradise Lost*, ends without any regular close, perfect or imperfect: it breaks off abruptly, where Satan, seated on his throne, is prepared to make a speech to the convoked host of the fall'n angels; and the second book, be-  
gins

gins with the speech. Milton seems to have copied the *Æneid*, of which the two first books are divided much in the same manner. Neither is there any proper pause at the end of the fifth book of the *Æneid*. There is no proper pause at end of the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*, nor at the end of the eleventh.

Hitherto I have carried on together the epic and dramatic compositions. I proceed to handle them separately, and to mention circumstances peculiar to each, beginning with the epic kind. In a theatrical entertainment, which employs both the eye and the ear, it would be a monstrous absurdity to introduce upon the stage invisible beings in a visible shape. But it has been much disputed, whether such beings may not be properly introduced in an epic poem. If we rest upon the authority of practice, we must declare for the affirmative; and Boileau \*, among many other critics, is a stout champion for this sort of machinery. But waving authority, which is apt to im-

\* Third part of his art of poetry.



post upon the judgement, let us draw what light we can from reason. I begin with a preliminary remark, That this matter is but indistinctly handled by critics. It is laid down above, that several passions incite the mind to animate its objects\*: the moral virtues become so many goddesses, and even darts and arrows are inspired with life and action. But then it must not be overlooked, that such personification, being the work of imagination, is descriptive only, and assumes not even an appearance of truth†. This is very different from what is termed *machinery*, where deities, angels, devils, or other supernatural powers, are introduced as real personages, mixing in the action, and contributing to the catastrophe; and yet these two things are constantly jumbled together in the reasoning. The poetical privilege of animating insensible objects for the sake of description, cannot be controverted, because it is founded on a natural principle. But has the privilege of machinery, if it be a privilege, the

\* Chap. 29. sect. 1.

† Ibid.

same good foundation? Far from it: nothing can be more unnatural. Its effects, at the same time, are deplorable. First, it gives an air of fiction to the whole; and prevents that impresson of reality which is requisite to interest our affections, and to move our passions \*. This of itself is sufficient to explode machinery, whatever entertainment it may give to readers of a fantastic taste or irregular imagination. And next, were it possible to disguise the fiction, and to delude us into a notion of reality, which I think can hardly be, an insuperable objection would still remain, which is, that the aim or end of an epic poem can never be accomplished in any perfection where machinery is introduced. Virtuous emotions cannot be raised successfully but by the actions of those who are endued with passions and affections like our own, that is, by human actions. And as for moral instruction, it is evident, that we can draw none from beings who act not upon the same principles with us. A fable in *Æsop's*

\* See chap. 2. part 1. sect. 6.

manner is no objection to this reasoning. His lions, bulls, and goats, are truly men under disguise : they act and feel in every respect as human beings ; and the moral we draw is founded on that supposition. Homer, it is true, introduces the gods into his fable ; and he was authorised to take that liberty by the religion of his country ; it being an article in the Grecian creed, that the gods often interpose visibly and bodily in human affairs. I must however observe, that Homer's deities do no honour to his poems. Fictions that transgress the bounds of nature, seldom have a good effect : they may inflame the imagination for a moment, but will not be relished by any person of a correct taste. Let me add, that of whatever use such fictions may be to a mean genius, an able writer has much finer materials of Nature's production for elevating his subject, and making it interesting.

Boileau, a strenuous advocate for the Heathen deities, as observed, declares against angels and devils, though supported by the religious creed of his country. One would be apt to imagine, that a critic fa-

med for his good taste, could have no other meaning than to justify the employing Heathen deities for enlivening or elevating the description. But as the Heathen deities make not a better figure in poetical language than angels and devils, Boileau, in pleading for the former, certainly meant, if he had any distinct meaning, that these may be introduced as actors. And, in fact, he himself is guilty of this glaring absurdity, where it is not so pardonable as in an epic poem. In his ode upon the taking of Namur, he demands with a most serious countenance, whether the walls were built by Apollo or Neptune; and in relating the passage of the Rhine, *anno* 1672, he describes the god of that river as fighting with all his might to oppose the French monarch. This is confounding fiction with reality at a strange rate. The French writers in general run into this error: wonderful! that they should not be sensible how ridiculous it is.

That this is a capital error in the *Gierusalemme liberata*, Tasso's greatest admirers must acknowledge. A situation can never  
be

be intricate, nor the reader ever in pain about the catastrophe, so long as there is an angel, devil, or magician, to lend a helping hand. Voltaire, in his essay upon epic poetry, talking of the *Pharsalia*, observes judiciously, "That the proximity of time, the  
 "notoriety of events, the character of the  
 "age, enlightened and political, joined  
 "with the solidity of Lucan's subject, deprived him of all liberty of poetical fiction." Is it not amazing, that a critic who reasons so justly with respect to others, can be so blind with respect to himself? Voltaire, not satisfied to enrich his language with images drawn from invisible and superior beings, introduces them into the action. In the sixth canto of the *Henriade*, St Louis appears in person, and terrifies the soldiers; in the seventh canto, St Louis sends the god of Sleep to Henry; and, in the tenth, the demons of Discord, Fanaticism, War, &c. assist Aumale in a single combat with Turenne, and are chased away by a good angel brandishing the sword of God. To blend such fictitious personages in the same action with mortals,

makes a bad figure at any rate ; and is intolerable in a history so recent as that of Henry IV. This singly is sufficient to make the *Henriade* a short-liv'd poem, were it otherwise possessed of every beauty. I have tried serious reasoning upon this subject ; but ridicule, I suppose, will be found a more successful weapon, which Addison has applied in an elegant manner : “ Whereas  
 “ the time of a general peace is, in all appearance, drawing near ; being informed  
 “ that there are several ingenious persons  
 “ who intend to shew their talents on so  
 “ happy an occasion, and being willing, as  
 “ much as in me lies, to prevent that effusion  
 “ of nonsense which we have good cause  
 “ to apprehend ; I do hereby strictly require every person who shall write on  
 “ this subject, to remember that he is a  
 “ Christian, and not to sacrifice his catholicism to his poetry. In order to it, I  
 “ do expect of him in the first place, to  
 “ make his own poem, without depending  
 “ upon Phœbus for any part of it, or calling out for aid upon any of the muses by name. I do likewise positively  
 “ forbid

“ forbid the sending of Mercury with any  
“ particular message or dispatch relating to  
“ the peace; and shall by no means suffer  
“ Minerva to take upon her the shape of  
“ any plenipotentiary concerned in this  
“ great work. I do further declare, that  
“ I shall not allow the destinies to have  
“ had an hand in the deaths of the several  
“ thousands who have been slain in the  
“ late war; being of opinion that all such  
“ deaths may be very well accounted for  
“ by the Christian system of powder and  
“ ball. I do therefore strictly forbid the  
“ fates to cut the thread of man’s life upon  
“ any pretence whatsoever, unless it be for  
“ the sake of the rhyme. And whereas I  
“ have good reason to fear, that Neptune  
“ will have a great deal of business on his  
“ hands in several poems which we may  
“ now suppose are upon the anvil, I do  
“ also prohibit his appearance, unless it be  
“ done in metaphor, simile, or any very  
“ short allusion; and that even here he be  
“ not permitted to enter, but with great  
“ caution and circumspection. I desire that  
“ the same rule may be extended to his  
“ whole

“ whole fraternity of Heathen gods ; it be-  
 “ ing my design to condemn every poem  
 “ to the flames in which Jupiter thunders,  
 “ or exercises any other act of authority  
 “ which does not belong to him. In short,  
 “ I expect that no Pagan agent shall be in-  
 “ troduced, or any fact related which a  
 “ man cannot give credit to with a good  
 “ conscience. Provided always, that no-  
 “ thing herein contained shall extend, or  
 “ be construed to extend, to several of the  
 “ female poets in this nation, who shall  
 “ still be left in full possession of their gods  
 “ and goddesses, in the same manner as  
 “ if this paper had never been written.”

*Spectator*, N<sup>o</sup> 523.

The marvellous is indeed so much pro-  
 moted by machinery, that it is not won-  
 derful to find it embraced by the bulk of  
 writers, and perhaps of readers. If indul-  
 ged at all, it is generally indulged to ex-  
 cess. Homer introduces his deities with no  
 greater ceremony than his mortals ; and  
 Virgil has still less moderation : an over-  
 watched pilot cannot fall asleep and drop  
 into the sea by natural means : the two  
 lovers,



lovers, Æneas and Dido, cannot take the same bed, without the immediate interposition of superior powers. The ridiculous in such fictions, must appear even through the thickest veil of gravity and solemnity.

Angels and devils serve equally with the Heathen deities, as materials for figurative language, perhaps better among Christians, because we believe in them, and not in the Heathen deities. But every one is sensible, as well as Boileau, that the invisible powers in our creed make a much worse figure as actors in a modern poem, than the invisible powers in the Heathen creed did in ancient poems. The reason I take to be what follows. The Heathen deities, in the opinion of their votaries, were beings elevated one step only above mankind, actuated by the same passions, and directed by the same motives; therefore not altogether improper to mix with mankind in an important action. In our creed, superior beings are placed at such a mighty distance from us, and are of a nature so different, that with no propriety can they appear with us upon the same stage. Man is a creature so much inferior,

ferior; that he loses all dignity when set in opposition.

There seems to be no doubt, that an historical poem admits the embellishment of allegory, as well as of metaphor, simile, or other figure. Moral truth, in particular, is finely illustrated in the allegorical manner. It amuses the fancy to find abstract terms, by a sort of magic, converted into active beings; and it is delightful to trace a general proposition in a pictured event. But allegorical beings should be confined within their own sphere; and never be admitted to mix in the principal action, nor to co-operate in retarding or advancing the catastrophe. This would have a still worse effect, than the introduction of invisible powers; and I am ready to assign the reason. An historical fable affords entertainment chiefly by making us conceive its personages to be really existing and acting in our presence: in an allegory, this agreeable delusion is denied; for we must not imagine an allegorical personage to be a real being; but the figure only of some virtue or vice; otherwise the allegory is lost. The impression  
of

of real existence, essential to an epic poem, is inconsistent with that figurative existence which is essential to an allegory; and therefore no method can be more effectual to destroy the impression of reality, than to introduce allegorical beings co-operating with those whom we conceive to be really existing. The love-episode in the *Henriade* \*, is insufferable by the discordant mixture of allegory with real life. This episode is copied from that of Rinaldo and Armida in the *Gierusalemme liberata*, which hath no merit to intitle it to be copied. An allegorical object, such as fame in the *Aeneid*, and the temple of love in the *Henriade*, may find place in a description: but to introduce Discord as a real personage, imploring the assistance of Love as another real personage, to enervate the courage of the hero, is making these figurative beings act beyond their sphere, and creating a strange jumble of discordant materials, viz. truth and fiction. The allegory of Sin and Death in the *Paradise Lost*, is, I pre-

\* Canto 9.

sume, not generally relished, though it is not entirely of the same nature with what I have been condemning. The *Paradise Lost* is not confined to the history of our first parents ; and in a work comprehending the achievements of superior beings, there is more room for fancy than where it is confined to human actions.

What is the true notion of an episode? or how is it to be distinguished from what is really a part of the principal action? Every incident that promotes or retards the catastrophe, must be a part of the principal action. This clears the nature of an episode; which may be defined, “ An incident connected with the principal action, but which contributes not either to advance or retard it.” The descent of Æneas into hell doth not advance or retard the catastrophe ; and therefore is an episode. The story of Nisus and Euryalus, producing an alteration in the affairs of the contending parties, is a part of the principal action. The family-scene in the sixth book of the *Iliad* is of the same nature : by Hector’s retiring from the field of battle to visit his wife,

wife, the Grecians got liberty to breathe, and even to press upon the Trojans. It being thus the nature of an episode to break the unity of action, it ought never to be indulged unless to refresh and unbend the mind after the fatigue of a long narration. This purpose of an episode demands the following properties. It ought to be well connected with the principal action : it ought to be short : and it ought to be lively and interesting.

Next, upon the peculiarities of a dramatic poem. And the first I shall mention is a double plot ; being naturally led to it by what is said immediately above. One of these double plots must be of the nature of an episode in an epic poem ; for it would distract the spectator, instead of entertaining him, if he were forc'd to attend, at the same time, to two capital plots equally interesting. An under-plot in a tragedy has seldom a good effect ; because a passionate piece cannot be too simple. The sympathetic emotions once roused, cling to their objects, and cannot bear interruption :

when a subject fills the mind, it leaves no room for any separate concern \*. Variety is more tolerable in comedy, which pretends only to amuse, without totally occupying

\* Racine, in his preface to the tragedy of *Berenice*, is sensible, that simplicity is a great beauty in tragedy, but mistakes the cause. "Nothing (says he) but verisimilitude pleases in tragedy: but where is the verisimilitude, that wishes the compass of a day, events should be crowded which commonly are extended through months?" This is mistaking the accuracy of imitation for the probability or improbability of future events. I explain myself. The verisimilitude required in tragedy, is that the actions correspond to the manners, and the manners to nature. When this resemblance is preserved, the imitation is just, because it is a true copy of nature. But I deny that the verisimilitude of future events, meaning the probability of future events, is any rule in tragedy. A number of extraordinary events, are, it is true, seldom crowded within the compass of a day: but what seldom happens may happen; and when such events fall out, they appear not less natural than the most ordinary accidents. To make verisimilitude in the sense of probability a governing rule in tragedy, would annihilate this sort of writing altogether; for it would exclude all extraordinary events, in which the life of tragedy consists. It is very improbable or unlikely, pitching upon any man at random, that he will sacrifice his life and fortune for his mistress or for his country: yet when this event happens, supposing it agreeable to the character, we recognize the verisimilitude as to nature, whatever want of verisimilitude or of probability there was *a priori* that such would be the event.

the

the mind. But even here, to make a double plot agreeable, a good deal of art is requisite. The under-plot ought not to vary greatly in its tone from that which is principal: passions may be varied, but discordant passions are unpleasant when jumbled together. This is a solid objection to tragedy. For this reason, I blame the *Provok'd Husband*: all the scenes that bring the family of the Wrongheads into action, being ludicrous and farcical, agree very ill with the sharpness and severity of the principal subject, exhibiting the discord betwixt Lord Townly and his lady. The same objection touches not the double plot of the *Careless Husband*: the different subjects are sweetly connected; and have only so much variety as to resemble shades of colours harmoniously mixed. But this is not all. The under plot ought to be connected with the principal action, so as to employ the same persons: the intervals or pauses of the principal action ought to be filled with the under-plot; and both ought to be concluded together. This is the case of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Violent

Violent action ought to be excluded from the stage. While the dialogue runs on, a thousand particulars concur to delude us into an impression of reality; genuine sentiments, passionate language, and persuasive gesture. The spectator once engaged, is willing to be deceived, loses sight of himself, and without scruple enjoys the spectacle as a reality. From this absent state, he is roused by violent action: he wakes as from a pleasing dream, and gathering his senses about him, finds all to be a fiction. Horace delivers the same rule; and founds it upon the reason given:

*Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;  
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;  
Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.  
Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.*

The French critics, as it appears to me, misapprehend the reason of this rule. Shedding blood upon the stage, say they, is barbarous and shocking to a polite audience. This no doubt is an additional reason for excluding bloodshed from the  
French



French stage, supposing the French to be in reality so delicate. But this evidently is not the reason that weighed with the Greeks: that polite people had no notion of such delicacy; witness the murder of Clytemnestra by her son Orestes, passing behind the scene, as represented by Sophocles. Her voice is heard calling out for mercy, bitter expostulations on his part, loud shrieks upon her being stabb'd, and then a deep silence. I appeal to every person of feeling, whether this scene be not more horrible, than if the deed had been committed in sight of the spectators upon a sudden gust of passion. According to the foregoing reasoning of the French critics, there is nothing to exclude from the stage a duel occasioned by an affair of honour, because in it there is nothing barbarous or shocking to a polite audience: yet a scene of this nature is excluded from the French stage; which shows, without more argument, that these critics have misapprehended the rule laid down by Horace. If Corneille, in representing the affair betwixt Horatius and his sister, upon which murder ensues

ensues behind the scene, had no other view than to remove from the spectators a scene of horror, he certainly was in a capital mistake : for murder in cold blood, which in some measure was the case as represented, is more horrible even where the conclusive stab is not seen, than the same act performed on the stage by violent and unpremeditated passion, as suddenly repented of as committed. I heartily agree with Addison \*, that no part of this incident ought to have been represented, but reserved for a narrative, with all the alleviating circumstances possible in favour of the hero. This is the only method to avoid the difficulties that unqualify this incident for representation, a deliberate murder on the one hand, and on the other a violent action performed on the stage, which must rouse the spectator from his dream of reality.

I shall finish with a few words upon the dialogue ; which ought to be so conducted as to be a true representation of nature. I

\* Spectator, No. 44.

talk not here of the sentiments, nor of the language; for these come under different heads. I talk of what properly belongs to dialogue-writing; where every single speech, short or long, ought to arise from what is said by the former speaker, and furnish matter for what comes after, till the end of the scene. In this view, the whole speeches, from first to last, represent so many links, all connected together in one regular chain. No author, ancient or modern, possesses the art of dialogue equal to Shakespear. Dryden, in this particular, may justly be placed as his opposite. He frequently introduces three or four persons speaking upon the same subject, each throwing out his own sentiments separately, without regarding what is said by the rest. I give for an example the first scene of *Aurenzebe*. Sometimes he makes a number club in relating an event, not to a stranger, supposed ignorant of it, but to one another, for the sake merely of speaking. Of this notable sort of dialogue, we have a specimen in the first scene of the first part of the *Conquest of Granada*. In the second part of the same tragedy,

scene second, the King, Abenamar, and Zulema, make their separate observations, like so many soliloquies, upon the fluctuating temper of the mob. It puts one in mind of a pastoral, where two shepherds are introduced reciting couplets alternately, each in praise of his own mistress, as if they were contending for a prize.

The bandying sentiments in this manner, beside an unnatural air, has another bad effect. It stays the course of the action, because it is not productive of any consequence. In Congreve's comedies, the action is often suspended to make way for a play of wit. But of this more particularly in the chapter immediately following.

## C H A P. XXIII.

## The three Unities.

**T**HE first chapter unfolds the pleasure we have in a chain of connected facts. In histories of the world, of a country, of a people, this pleasure is but faint; because the connections are slight or obscure. We find more entertainment in biography, where the incidents are connected by their relation to one person, who makes a figure and commands our attention. But the greatest entertainment of the kind, is afforded by the history of a single event, supposing it to be interesting. The history of one event produceth a more entire connection among the parts, than the history of one person. In the latter, the circumstances are not otherwise connected than by their relation to that person: in the

K k 2

former,

former, the circumstances are connected by the strongest of all relations, that of cause and effect. Thus, the circumstances of a single event, having a mutual connection extremely intimate, form a delightful train: we survey with peculiar pleasure a number of facts that give birth to each other; and we pass with ease and satisfaction from the first to the last.

But this subject merits a more particular discussion. When we consider the chain of causes and effects in the material world, independent of purpose, design, or thought, we find a train of incidents in succession, without beginning, middle, or end. Every thing that happens is both a cause and an effect: it is the effect of something that goes before, and the cause of one or many things that follow. One incident may affect us more, another less; but all of them, great and small, are so many links in the universal chain. The mind, in viewing these incidents, cannot rest or settle ultimately upon any one; but is carried along in the train without any close.

But

But when the intellectual world is taken under view, in conjunction with the material, the scene is varied. Man acts with deliberation, will, and choice; he acts with a view to some end, glory, for example, or riches, or conquest, the procuring happiness to individuals, or to his country in general; and he proposes means and lays schemes to attain the end proposed. Here is recognised a capital end or event, connected with subordinate events or incidents by the relation of causation. In running over a series of subordinate events, we cannot rest upon any one; because they are presented to us as means only, leading to some end. But we rest with satisfaction upon the ultimate event; because there, the purpose, the plan, the aim, of the chief person or persons, is completed and brought to a final conclusion. This indicates a beginning, a middle, and an end, of what Aristotle calls *an entire action*\*. The story naturally begins with describing those circumstances which move the distinguished person to form a plan, in

\* Poet. cap 6. See also cap. 7.

order to compals some desired event. The prosecution of that plan, and the obstructions, carry the reader into the heat of action. The middle is properly where the action is the most involved ; and the end is where the event is brought about, and the design accomplished.

A design or plan thus happily perfected, after many obstructions, affords wonderful delight to the reader. And to produce this delight, a principle mentioned above \* mainly contributes ; a principle that disposes the mind to complete every work commenced, and in general to carry every thing to its ultimate conclusion.

I have given the foregoing example of a plan laid down and completed, because it affords the clearest conception of a beginning, a middle, and an end, in which consists unity of action : and indeed stricter unity cannot be imagined than in this case. But an action may have unity, or a beginning, middle, and end, without so intimate a relation of parts. The catastrophe

\* Chap. 8.



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may be different from what is intended or desired; which is frequently the case in our best tragedies. The *Æneid* is an instance of means employ'd to produce a certain event, and these means crowned with success. The *Iliad* is formed upon a different model. It begins with the quarrel betwixt Achilles and Agamemnon: it goes on to describe the several effects produced by that cause; and ends in a reconciliation. Here is unity of action, no doubt, a beginning, a middle, and an end: it must however be acknowledged, that the *Æneid* is more happy in point of connection. The mind hath a propensity to go forward in the chain of history: it keeps always in view the expected event; and when the incidents or under-parts are connected together by their relation to the event, the mind runs sweetly and easily along them. This pleasure we have in the *Æneid*. But it is not altogether so pleasant, as in the *Iliad*, to connect effects by their common cause; for such connection forces the mind to a continual retrospect: (looking backward is like walking backward.)

But

But Homer's plan is still more imperfect, for another reason, That the events described are but imperfectly connected with the wrath of Achilles as their cause. His wrath did not exert itself in action ; and the misfortunes of his countrymen were but negatively the effects of his wrath, by depriving them of his assistance.

If unity of action be a capital beauty in a fable imitative of human affairs, a double action must be a capital defect, by carrying on together two trains of unconnected objects. For the sake of variety, we indulge an under-plot that contributes to the principal event. But two unconnected events are a great deformity ; and it lessens the deformity but a very little, to engage the same actors in both. Ariosto is quite licentious in this particular : he carries on at the same time a plurality of unconnected stories. His only excuse is, that his plan is perfectly well adjusted to his subject ; for every thing in the *Orlando Furioso* is wild and extravagant.

To state facts according to the order of time, is the most natural and the most simple

simple method: a method however not so essential, in an historical fable especially, as not to yield to some conspicuous beauties\*. If a noted story, cold and simple in its first movements, be made the subject of an epic poem, the reader may be hurried into the heat of action, reserving the preliminaries for a conversation-piece, if it shall be thought necessary. This method, at the same time, being dramatic, hath a peculiar beauty, which narration cannot reach †. Romance-writers, who give little attention to nature, deviate in this particular, among many, from a just standard. They make no difficulty of presenting to the reader, without the least preparation, unknown persons engaged in some adventure equally unknown. In *Cassandra*, two personages, who afterward are discovered to be the heroes of the story, start up completely armed upon the banks of the Euphrates, and engage in a single combat ‡.

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\* See chap. I.

† See chap. 21.

‡ I am sensible that a commencement of this sort is much relished by certain readers disposed to wonder. Their curi-

A play analyzed, is a chain of connected facts, of which each scene makes a link. Each scene, accordingly, ought to produce some incident relative to the catastrophe or ultimate event, by advancing or retarding it. If no incident be produced, such a scene, which may be termed barren, ought not to be indulged, because it breaks the unity of action. A barren scene can never be intitled to a place, because the chain is complete without it. In the *Old Bachelor*, the 3d scene of act 2. and all that follow to the end of that act, are mere conversation-pieces, without any consequence. The 10th and 11th scenes, act 3. *Double Dealer*, the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th scenes, act 1. *Love for Love*, are of the same kind. Neither is *The Way of the World* entirely guiltless of such scenes. It will be no justification, that they help to display characters. It were better, like

city is raised, and they are much tickled in its gratification. But curiosity is at an end with the first reading, because the personages are no longer unknown; and therefore, at the second reading a commencement so artificial, loses all its power even over the vulgar. A writer of genius loves to deal in lasting beauties.

Dryden,

Dryden, in his *dramatis persona*, to describe characters beforehand, which would not interrupt the chain of action. But a writer of genius has no occasion for such artifice: he can display the characters of his personages much more to the life in sentiment and action. How successfully is this done by Shakespear! in whose works there is not to be found a single barren scene.

Upon the whole, it appears, that all the facts in an historical fable, ought to have a mutual connection by their common relation to the grand event or catastrophe. And this relation, in which the *unity* of action consists, is equally essential to epic and dramatic compositions.

How far the unities of time and of place are essential, is a question of greater intricacy. These unities were strictly observed in the Grecian and Roman theatres; and they are inculcated by the French and English critics as essential to every dramatic composition. In theory, these unities are also acknowledged by our best poets, though their practice is seldom correspondent: they are often forc'd to take liberties, which they

pretend not to justify, against the practice of the Greeks and Romans, and against the solemn decision of their own countrymen. But in the course of this inquiry it will be made evident, that the example of the ancients ought, upon this point, to have no weight with us, and that our critics are guilty of a mistake, in admitting no greater latitude of place and time than was admitted in Greece and Rome.

Suffer me only to premise, that the unities of place and time, are not, by the most rigid critics, required in a narrative poem. In such a composition, if it pretend to copy nature, these unities would be absurd; because real events are seldom confined within narrow limits either of place or of time. And yet we can follow history, or an historical fable, through all its changes, with the greatest facility. We never once think of measuring the real time by what is taken in reading; nor of forming any connection betwixt the place of action and that which we occupy.

I am sensible, that the drama differs so far from the epic, as to admit different rules.

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It will be observed, "That an historical fable, which affords entertainment by reading solely, is under no limitation of time or of place, more than a genuine history; but that a dramatic composition cannot be accurately represented, unless it be limited, as its representation is, to one place and to a few hours; and therefore that no fable can be admitted but what has these properties, because it would be absurd to compose a piece for representation that cannot be justly represented." This argument, I acknowledge, has at least a plausible appearance; and yet one is apt to suspect some fallacy, considering that no critic, however strict, has ventured to confine the unities of place and of time within so narrow bounds\*.

\* Boissu, after observing, with wonderful critical sagacity, that winter is an improper season for an epic poem, and might not less improper for tragedy; admits however, that an epic poem may be spread through the whole summer months, and a tragedy through the whole sunshine hours of the longest summer-day. *Du poeme epique*, l. 3. chap. 12. At this rate an English tragedy may be longer than a French tragedy; and in Nova Zembla the time of a tragedy and of an epic poem may be the same.

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A view of the Grecian drama, and a comparison betwixt it and our own, may perhaps help to relieve us from this dilemma. If they be differently constructed, as shall by and by be made evident, it is possible that the foregoing reasoning may not be applicable with equal force to both. This is an article, that, with relation to the present subject, has not, so far as I know, been examined by any writer.

All authors agree, that the first notion of tragedy in Greece, was derived from the hymns in praise of Bacchus, which were sung in parts by a chorus. Thespis, to relieve the singers, and for the sake of variety, introduced one actor ; who gave a narrative of the subject, and sometimes represented one or other personage. Eschylus, introducing a second actor, formed the dialogue ; by which the performance became dramatic : and the actors were multiplied when the subject represented made it necessary. But still, the chorus, which gave a beginning to tragedy, was considered as an essential part of its constitution. In the first scene, generally, are unfolded the preliminary



liminary circumstances that lead to the grand event. This scene is by Aristotle termed the *prologue*. In the second scene, where the action properly begins, the chorus is introduced, which, as originally, continues upon the stage during the whole performance. Sophocles adheres to this plan religiously. Euripides is not altogether so correct. In some of his pieces it becomes necessary to remove the chorus. But this is seldom done; and when done, matters are so ordered as that their absence is but momentary. The chorus often mix in the dialogue; and when the dialogue happens to be suspended, the chorus, during the interval, is employ'd in singing. Nor does the removal of the chorus, when that unusual step is risked, interrupt the representation. They never leave the stage of their own accord, but at the command of some principal personage who constantly waits their return.

Thus the Grecian drama is a continued representation without any interruption; a circumstance that merits attention. A continued representation without a pause, affords

fords not opportunity to vary the place of action; and has withal a very short duration. To a representation so confined in place and time, the foregoing reasoning is strictly applicable. A real or feigned action that is brought to a conclusion after considerable intervals of time and frequent change of place, cannot accurately be copied in a representation that admits of no latitude in either. Hence it is, that the unities of place and of time, were, or ought to have been, strictly observed in the Grecian tragedies. This is made necessary by the very constitution of their drama; for it is absurd to compose a tragedy that cannot be justly represented.

Modern critics, who for our drama pretend to establish rules founded on the practice of the Greeks, are guilty of an egregious blunder. The unities of place and of time, so much vaunted, were in Greece, as we see, a matter of necessity, not of choice. I am now ready to show, that if we submit to these fetters, it must be from choice not necessity. This will be evident upon taking a view of the construction

tion of our drama, which differs widely from that of Greece ; whether more or less perfect, is a separate question, which shall be handled afterward. By dropping the chorus, an opportunity is afforded to split our drama into parts or acts, which in the representation are distinguished by intervals of time ; and during these intervals, the stage is totally evacuated and the spectacle suspended. This construction qualifies our drama for subjects spread through a wide space both of time and of place. The time supposed to pass during the suspension of the representation, is not measured by the time of the suspension ; nor is any connection formed, betwixt the box we sit in and the place where things are supposed to be transacted in our absence : and by that means, many subjects can be justly represented in our theatres, for which there was no place in those of ancient Greece. This doctrine may be illustrated, by comparing a modern play to a set of historical pictures : let us suppose them five in number, and the resemblance will be complete. Each of the pictures resembles an act in one

of our plays. There must necessarily be the strictest unity of place and of time in each picture ; and the same necessity requires these two unities during each act of a play, because during an act there is no interruption in the spectacle. Now, when we view in succession a number of such historical pictures, let it be, for example, the history of Alexander by Le Brun, we have no difficulty to conceive, that months or years have passed betwixt the subjects exhibited in two different pictures, though the interruption is imperceptible in passing our eye from the one to the other. We have as little difficulty to conceive a change of place, however great. In this matter, there is truly no difference betwixt five acts of a modern play and five such pictures. Where the representation is suspended, we can with the greatest facility suppose any length of time or any change of place. The spectator, it is true, may be conscious, that the real time and place are not the same with what are employ'd in the representation, even including the intervals. But this is a work of reflection ; and by the same reflection

tion he may also be conscious, that Garrick is not King Lear, that the playhouse is not Dover cliffs, nor the noise he hears thunder and lightning. In a word, during an interruption of the representation, it is not more difficult for a spectator to imagine himself carried from place to place, and from one period of time to another, than at once, when the scene first opens, to be carried from London to Rome, or from the present time two thousand years back. And indeed, it must appear ridiculous, that a critic, who makes no difficulty of supposing candle-light to be sun-shine, and some painted canvasses a palace or a prison; should affect so much difficulty in imagining a latitude of place or of time in the story, beyond what is necessary in the representation.

There are, I acknowledge, some effects of great latitude in time that ought never to be indulged in a composition for the theatre. Nothing can be more absurd, than at the close to exhibit a full grown person who appears a child at the beginning. The mind rejects as contrary to all probability,

bility, such latitude of time as is requisite for a change so remarkable. The greatest change from place to place hath not altogether the same bad effect. In the bulk of human affairs place is not material; and the mind, when occupied with an interesting event, is little regardful of minute circumstances. These may be varied at will, because they scarce make any impression.

But though I have thus taken arms to rescue modern poets from the slavish fetters of modern critics, I would not be understood to justify liberty without any reserve. An unbounded licence with relation to place and time, is faulty for a reason that seems to have been overlooked: it never fails to break in upon the unity of action. In the ordinary course of human affairs, single events, such as are fit to be represented on the stage, are confined to a narrow spot, and generally employ no great extent of time. We accordingly seldom find strict unity of action in a dramatic composition, where any remarkable latitude is indulged in these particulars. I must say farther, that a composition which employs but one  
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place, and requires not a greater length of time than is necessary for the representation, is so far the more perfect : because the confining an event within so narrow bounds, contributes to the unity of action ; and also prevents that labour, however slight, which the mind must undergo in imagining frequent changes of place and many intervals of time. But still I must insist, that the limitation of (place and time) which (was necessary in the Grecian drama, is no rule to us ; and therefore that though such limitation adds one beauty more to the composition, it is at best but a refinement, which may justly give place to a thousand beauties more substantial. And I may add, that it is extremely difficult, I was about to say impracticable, to contract within the Grecian limits, any fable so fruitful of incidents in number and variety as to give full scope to the fluctuation of passion.

It may now appear, that critics who put the unities of place and of time upon the same footing with the unity of action, making them all equally essential, have not attended to the nature and construction of the modern

modern drama. If they admit an interrupted representation, with which no writer finds fault, it is plainly absurd to condemn the greatest advantage it procures us, that of representing many interesting subjects excluded from the Grecian stage. If there needs must be a reformation, why not restore the ancient chorus and the ancient continuity of action? There is certainly no medium; for to admit an interruption without relaxing from the strict unities of place and of time, is in effect to load us with all the inconveniencies of the ancient drama, and at the same time to withhold from us its advantages.

And therefore the only proper question is, whether our model be or be not a real improvement. This indeed may justly be called in question; and in order to a fair comparative trial, some particulars must be premised. When a play begins, we have no difficulty to enter into the scene of action, however distant it be in time or in place. We know that the play is a representation only: and the imagination, with facility, accommodates itself to every circumstance. Our situation is very different  
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after we are engaged. It is the perfection of representation to hide itself, to impose upon the spectator, and to produce in him an impression of reality, as if he were spectator of a real event\*. Any interruption annihilates this impression: he is roused out of his waking dream, and unhappily restored to his senses. So difficult it is to support this impression of reality, that much slighter interruptions than the interval betwixt two acts are sufficient to dissolve the charm. In the 5th act of the *Mourning Bride*, the three first scenes are in a room of state; the fourth in a prison. This change is operated by shifting the scene, which is done in a trice. But however quick the transition may be, it is impracticable to impose upon the spectators so far as to make them conceive that they are actually carried from the palace to the prison. They immediately reflect, that the palace and prison are imaginary, and that the whole is a fiction.

From these premises one will be naturally led, at first view, to declare against

\* Chap. 2. part 1. sect. 6.

the frequent interruptions in the modern drama. It will occur, "That every interruption must have the effect to banish the dream of reality, and with it to banish our concern, which cannot subsist while we are conscious that all is a fiction; and therefore that in the modern drama sufficient time is not afforded for the fluctuation and swelling of passion, like what is afforded in the Grecian drama, where there is no interruption." This reasoning, it must be owned, has a specious appearance: but we must not turn faint-hearted upon the first repulse; let us rally our troops for a second engagement.

Considering attentively the ancient drama, we find, that though the representation is never interrupted, the principal action is suspended not less frequently than in the modern drama. There are five acts in each; and the only difference is, that in the former, when the action is suspended, as it is at the end of every act, opportunity is taken of the interval to employ the chorus in singing. Hence it appears, that  
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the Grecian continuity of representation cannot have the effect to prolong the impression of reality. To banish this impression, a suspension of the action while the chorus is employ'd in singing, is not less operative than a total suspension both of the representation and action.

But to open a larger view, I am ready to show, that a continued representation, without a single pause even in the principal action, so far from an advantage, would be really an imperfection; and that a representation with proper pauses, is better calculated for moving the audience, and making the strongest impressions. Representation cannot very long support an impression of reality: when the spirits are exhausted by close attention and by the agitation of passion, an uneasiness ensues, which never fails to banish the waking dream. Now supposing an act to employ as much time as can easily be given with strict attention to any incident, a supposition that cannot be far from the truth; it follows, that the impression of reality would not be prolonged beyond the space of an act, even supposing

a continued representation. Hence it appears, that a continued representation without any pause, would be a bad contrivance: it would break the attention by overstraining it, and produce a total absence of mind. In this respect, the four pauses have a fine effect. By affording to the audience a reasonable respite when the impression of reality is gone, and while nothing material is in agitation, they relieve the mind from its fatigue; and consequently prevent a wandering of thought at the very time possibly of the most interesting scenes.

In one article indeed, the Grecian model has greatly the advantage: its chorus, during an interval, not only preserves alive the impressions made upon the audience, but also prepares their hearts finely for new impressions. In our theatres, on the contrary, the audience, at the end of every act, are in a manner solicited to withdraw their thoughts from what has been passing, and to trifle away the time the best way they can. Thus in the intervals betwixt the acts, every warm impression is banished; and the spectators begin the next act cool and indifferent,

different, as at the commencement of the play. Here is a gross malady in our theatrical representations; but a malady that luckily is not incurable. To revive the Grecian chorus, would be to revive the Grecian slavery of place and time. But I can figure a detached chorus coinciding with a pause in the representation, as the ancient chorus did with a pause in the principal action. What objection, for example, can there lie against music betwixt the acts, vocal and instrumental, adapted to the subject? Such detached chorus, beside admitting the same latitude that we enjoy at present as to time and place, would have more than one happy effect: it would recruit the spirits; and it would preserve entire, the tone, if not the tide, of passion. The music that comes first, ought to accord with the tone of the preceding passion, and be gradually varied till it accord with the tone of the passion that is to succeed in the next act. The music and the representation would both of them be gainers by their conjunction; which will thus appear. Music that accords with the present tone

of mind, is, upon that account, doubly agreeable; and accordingly, though music singly hath not power to raise any passion, it tends greatly to support a passion already raised. Further, music, though it cannot of itself raise a passion, prepares us for the passion that follows: by making chearful, tender, melancholy, or animated impressions, music has power to dispose the heart to various passions. Of this power, the first scene of the *Mourning Bride* is a shining instance: without the preparation of soft music in a melancholy strain, it would be extremely difficult to enter all at once into Almeria's deep distress. In this manner, music and representation support each other delightfully: the impression made upon the audience by the representation, is a fine preparation for the music that succeeds; and the impression made by the music, is a fine preparation for the representation that succeeds. It appears to me clear, that, by some such contrivance, the modern drama may be improved, so as to enjoy the advantage of the ancient chorus without its slavish limitation of place and time. And as to music

music in particular, I cannot figure any plan that would tend more to its improvement. Composers, those for the stage at least, would be reduced to the happy necessity of studying and imitating nature; instead of indulging, according to the present fashion, in wild, fantastic, and unnatural conceits. But we must return to our subject, and finish the comparison betwixt the ancient and the modern drama.

The numberless improprieties forc'd upon the Grecian dramatic poets by the constitution of their drama, are, of themselves one should think, a sufficient reason for preferring that of the moderns, even abstracting from the improvement proposed. To prepare the reader for this article, it must be premised, that as in the ancient drama the place of action never varies, a place necessarily must be chosen to which every person may have access without any improbability. This confines the scene to some open place, generally the court or area before a palace; which excludes from the Grecian theatre transactions within doors, though these commonly are the most important,

important. Such cruel restraint is of itself sufficient to cramp the most pregnant invention; and accordingly the Grecian writers, in order to preserve unity of place, are reduced to woful improprieties. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides \*, Phedra, distressed in mind and body, is carried without any pretext from her palace to the place of action, is there laid upon a couch unable to support herself upon her limbs, and made to utter many things improper to be heard by a number of women who form the chorus. What is still worse, her female attendant uses the strongest intreaties to make her reveal the secret cause of her anguish; which at last Phedra, contrary to decency and probability, is prevailed upon to do in presence of this very chorus †. Alcestes, in *Euripides*, at the point of death, is brought from the palace to the place of action, groaning and lamenting her untimely fate ‡. In the *Trachiniens* of Sophocles ||, a secret is imparted to Dejanira, the wife

\* Act 1. sc. 6.

† Act 2. sc. 1.

† Act 2. sc. 2.

|| Act 2.



of Hercules, in presence of the chorus. In the tragedy of *Iphigenia*, the messenger employ'd to carry Clitemnestra the news that Iphigenia was sacrificed, stops short at the place of action, and with a loud voice calls the Queen from her palace to hear the news. Again, in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the necessary presence of the chorus forces Euripides into a gross absurdity, which is to form a secret plot in their hearing \*; and to disguise the absurdity, much courtship is bestowed on the chorus, not one woman but a number, to engage them to secrecy. In the *Medea* of Euripides, that princess makes no difficulty, in presence of the chorus, to plot the death of her husband, of his mistress, and of her father the King of Corinth, all by poison. It was necessary to bring Medea upon the stage, and there is but one place of action, which is always occupied by the chorus. This scene closes the second act; and in the end of the third, she frankly makes the chorus her confidants in plotting the murder of her own

\* Act 4. at the close.

children.

children. Terence, by identity of place, is often forc'd to make a conversation within doors be heard on the open street: the cries of a woman in labour are there heard distinctly.

The Grecian poets are not more happy with respect to time than with respect to place. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, that prince is banished at the end of the fourth act. In the first scene of the following act, a messenger relates to Theseus the whole particulars of the death of Hippolytus by the sea-monster. This remarkable event must have employ'd many hours; and yet in the representation it is confined to the time employ'd by the chorus upon the song at the end of the 4th act. The inconsistency is still greater in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*\*. The song could not exhaust half an hour; and yet the incidents supposed to have happened in that time, could not naturally be transacted in less than half a day.

The Grecian artists are not less frequently obliged to transgress another rule, derived

\* Act 5. sc. 4.

also from a continued representation, which is, that the place of action must constantly be occupied ; for the very least vacancy is an interruption of the representation. Sophocles, with regard to this rule as well as others, is generally correct. But Euripides cannot bear such restraint: he often evacuates the stage, and leaves it empty for others in succession. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, after pronouncing a soliloquy in the first scene, leaves the place of action, and is succeeded by Orestes and Pylades. They, after some conversation, walk off; and Iphigenia re-enters, accompanied with the chorus. In the *Alcestes*, which is of the same author, the place of action is void at the end of the third act. It is true, that to cover this irregularity, and to preserve the representation in motion, Euripides is extremely careful to fill the stage without loss of time. But this is still an interruption, and a link of the chain broken: for during the change of the actors, there must always be a space of time, when we cannot justly say, that the stage is occupied by either set. It makes indeed a more remarkable inter-

ruption, to change the place of action as well as the actors ; but that was not practicable upon the Grecian stage.

It is hard to say upon what model Terence has formed his plays. Having no chorus, there is a cessation in the representation at the end of every act. But advantage is not taken of this cessation, even to vary the place of action. The street is always chosen, where every thing passing may be seen by every person : and by this choice, the most sprightly and interesting parts of the action, which commonly pass within doors, are excluded ; witness the last act of the *Eunuch*. He hath submitted to the same slavery with respect to time. In a word, a play with a regular chorus, is not more confined in place and time than his plays are. Thus a zealous sectary follows implicitly ancient forms and ceremonies, without once considering whether their introductive cause be still subsisting. Plautus, of a bolder genius than Terence, makes good use of the liberty afforded by an interrupted representation : he varies the place of action upon all occasions, when the variation suits his purpose.

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The intelligent reader will by this time understand, that I plead for no change of place in our plays but after an interval, nor for any latitude in point of time but what falls in with an interval. The unities of place and time ought to be strictly observed during each act; for during the representation, there is no opportunity for the smallest deviation from either. Hence it is an essential requisite, that during an act the stage be always occupied; for even a momentary vacuity makes an interval. Another rule is not less essential: it would be a gross breach of the unity of action, to exhibit upon the stage two separate actions at the same time; and therefore to preserve this unity, it is necessary that each personage introduced during an act, be linked to those in possession of the stage, so as to join all in one action. These things follow from the very conception of an act, which admits not the slightest interruption. The moment the representation is intermitted, there is an end of that act; and we have no other notion of a new act, but where after a pause or interval, the representation

is again put in motion. French writers, generally speaking, are extremely correct in this particular: the English, on the contrary, are so irregular as scarce to deserve a criticism: actors not only succeed each other in the same place without connection; but, what is still worse, they frequently succeed each other in different places. This change of place in the same act, ought never to be indulged; for, beside breaking the unity of the act, it has a disagreeable effect. After an interval, the mind can readily accommodate itself to any place that is necessary, just as readily as at the commencement of the play; but during the representation, the mind rejects change of place. From the foregoing censure must be excepted the *Mourning Bride* of Congreve, where regularity concurs with the beauty of sentiment and of language, to make it one of the most complete pieces England has to boast of. I must acknowledge, however, that in point of regularity, this elegant performance is not altogether unexceptionable. In the four first acts, the unities of place and time are strictly observed:

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bat in the last act, there is a capital error with respect to unity of place. In the three first scenes of that act, the place of action is a room of state, which is changed to a prison in the fourth scene : the chain of the actors ~~withal~~ is broken ; for the persons introduced in the prison, are different from those who made their appearance in the room of state. This remarkable interruption of the representation, makes in effect two acts instead of one : and therefore, if it be a rule, that a play ought not to consist of more acts than five, this performance is so far defective in point of regularity. I may add, that even admitting six acts, the irregularity would not be altogether removed, without a longer pause in the representation than is allowed in the acting ; for it requires more than a momentary interruption, to enable the imagination readily to accommodate itself to a new place, or to prorogation of time. In *The Way of the World*, of the same author, unity of place is preserved during every act, and a stricter unity of time during the whole play than is necessary.

CHAP.

## Gardening and Architecture.

**T**HE books that have been composed upon architecture and upon embellishing ground, abound in practical instruction necessary for a mechanic: but in vain would we rummage them for rational principles to improve our taste. In a general system, it might be thought sufficient to have unfolded the principles that govern these and other fine arts, leaving the application to the reader: but as I would neglect no opportunity of illustrating these principles, I propose to give a specimen of their application to gardening and architecture, being favourite arts, though I profess no peculiar skill in either.

Gardening was at first an useful art: in the garden of Alcinoous, described by Homer, we find nothing done for pleasure merely.



merely. But gardening is now improved into a fine art; and when we talk of a garden without any epithet, a pleasure-garden, by way of eminence, is understood. The garden of Alcinoous, in modern language, was but a kitchen-garden. Architecture has run the same course. It continued many ages an useful art merely, before it aspired to be classed with the fine arts. Architecture therefore and gardening must be handled in a twofold view, as being useful arts as well as fine arts. The reader however will not here expect rules for improving any work of art in point of utility. It is no part of my plan to treat of any useful art as such. But there is a beauty in utility; and in discoursing of beauty, that of utility ought not to be neglected. This leads us to consider gardens and buildings in different views: they may be destined for use solely, for beauty solely, or for both. Such variety in the destination, bestows upon gardening and architecture a great command of beauties complex not less than various, which makes it difficult to form an accurate taste in these arts. And hence  
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that difference and wavering of taste which is more remarkable here than in any art that has but a single destination.

Architecture and gardening cannot otherwise entertain the mind, than by raising certain agreeable emotions or feelings; and before we descend to particulars, these arts shall be presented in a general view, by showing what are the emotions or feelings that can be raised by them. Poetry, as to its power of raising emotions, possesses justly the first place among the fine arts; for scarce one emotion of human nature is beyond its reach. Painting and sculpture are more circumscribed, having the command of no emotions but what are produced by sight. They are peculiarly successful in expressing painful passions, which are display'd by external signs extremely legible\*. Gardening, beside the emotions of beauty by means of regularity, order, proportion, colour, and utility, can raise emotions of grandeur, of sweetness, of gaiety, melancholy, wildness, and even of surprise or

\* See chap. 15.

wonder,

wonder. In architecture, regularity, order, and proportion, and the beauties that result from them, are still more conspicuous than in gardening. But with respect to the beauty of colour, architecture is far inferior. Grandeur can be expressed in a building, perhaps more successfully than in a garden; but as to the other emotions above mentioned, architecture hitherto has not been brought to the perfection of expressing them distinctly. To balance this defect, architecture can display the beauty of utility in the highest perfection.

But gardening possesses one advantage, which never can be equalled in the other art. A garden may be so contrived, as in various scenes to raise successively all its different emotions. But to operate this delicious effect, the garden must be extensive, so as to admit a slow succession: for a small garden, comprehended at one view, ought to be confined to one expression\*: it may be gay, it may be sweet, it may be gloomy; but an attempt to mix these, would create

\* See chap. 8.

a jumble of emotions not a little unpleasant. For the same reason, a building, even the most magnificent, is necessarily confined to one expression.

Architecture, considered as a fine art, instead of rivaling gardening in its progress toward perfection, seems not far advanced beyond its infant-state. To bring it to maturity, two things mainly are wanted. First, A greater variety of parts and ornaments than it seems provided with. Gardening here has greatly the advantage: it is provided with such plenty and such variety of materials, that it must be the fault of the artists, if the spectator be not entertained with different scenes, and affected with various emotions. But materials in architecture are so scanty, that artists hitherto have not been successful in raising emotions, other than those of beauty and grandeur. With respect to the former, there are indeed plenty of means, regularity, order, symmetry, simplicity; and with respect to the latter, the addition of size is sufficient. But though it be evident, that every building ought to have a certain character or expression

sion suitable to its destination; yet this is a refinement which artists have scarce ventured upon. A death's head and bones employ'd in monumental buildings, will indeed produce an emotion of gloom and melancholy: but every ornament of this kind, if these can be termed so, ought to be rejected, because they are in themselves disagreeable. The other thing wanted to bring the art to perfection, is, to ascertain the precise impression made by every single part and ornament; cupolas, spires, columns, carvings, statues, vases, &c. For in vain will an artist attempt rules for employing these, either singly or in combination, until the different emotions or feelings they produce be distinctly explained. Gardening in this particular hath also the advantage. The several emotions raised by trees, rivers, cascades, plains, eminences, and other materials it employs, are understood; and the nature of each can be described with some degree of precision, which is done occasionally in the foregoing parts of this work.

In gardening as well as in architecture, simplicity ought to be the governing taste. Profuse ornament hath no better effect than to confound the eye, and to prevent the object from making an impression as one entire whole. An artist destitute of genius for capital beauties, is naturally prompted to supply the defect by crowding his plan with slight embellishments. Hence in gardens, triumphal arches, Chinese houses, temples, obelisks, cascades, fountains, without end; and hence in buildings, pillars, vases, statues, and a profusion of carved work. Thus a woman who has no just taste, is apt to overcharge every part of her dress with ornament. Superfluity of decoration hath another bad effect: it gives the object a diminutive look. An island in a wide extended lake, makes it appear larger; but an artificial lake, which must always be little, appears still less by making an island in it\*.

In forming plans for embellishing a field, an artist void of taste deals in straight lines,

\* See appendix to part 5, chap. 2.

circles,

circles, squares; because these show best upon paper. He perceives not, that to humour and adorn nature is the perfection of his art; and that nature, neglecting regularity, reacheth superior beauties by distributing her objects in great variety with a bold hand. A large field laid out with strict regularity, is stiff and artificial. Nature indeed, in organized bodies comprehended under one view, studies regularity; which, for the same reason, ought to be studied in architecture: but in large objects, which cannot otherwise be surveyed than in parts and by succession; regularity and uniformity would be useless properties, because they cannot be discovered by the eye\*. Nature therefore, in her large works, neglects these properties; and in copying nature the artist ought to neglect them.

Having thus far carried on a comparison betwixt gardening and architecture, I proceed to rules peculiar to each; and I begin

\* A square field appears not such to the eye when viewed from any part of it; and the centre is the only place where a circular field preserves in appearance its real figure.

with

with gardening. The simplest idea of a garden, is that of a spot embellished with a number of natural objects, trees, walks, polish'd parterres, flowers, streams, &c. One more complex comprehends statues and buildings, that nature and art may be mutually ornamental. A third approaching nearer perfection, is of objects assembled together, in order to produce, not only an emotion of beauty, essential to gardens of every kind, but also some other particular emotion, grandeur, for example, gaiety, or any other of those above mentioned. The most perfect idea of a garden is an improvement upon the third, requiring the adjustment of the several parts, in such a manner as to inspire all the different emotions that can be raised by gardening. In this idea of a garden, the arrangement is an important circumstance; for it has been shown, that some emotions figure best in conjunction, and that others ought always to appear in succession and never in conjunction. I have had occasion to observe above\*, that when the most opposite emo-

\* Chap. 8.

tions,



tions, such as gloominess and gaiety, stillness and activity, follow each other in succession, the pleasure on the whole will be the greatest; but that opposite or dissimilar emotions ought not to be united, because they produce an unpleasant mixture \*. For that reason, a ruin, affording a sort of melancholy pleasure, ought not to be seen from a flower-parterre, which is gay and cheerful. But to pass immediately from an exhilarating object to a ruin, has a glorious effect; for each of the emotions is the more sensibly felt by being contrasted with the other. Similar emotions, on the other hand, such as gaiety and sweetness, stillness and gloominess, motion and grandeur, ought to be raised together; for their effects upon the mind are greatly heightened by their conjunction †.

Kent's method of embellishing a field, is admirable. It is painting a field with beautiful objects, natural and artificial, disposed like colours upon a canvas. It requires indeed more genius to paint in the

\* Chap. 2. part 4.

† See the place immediately above cited.

gardening way. In forming a landscape upon a canvas, no more is required but to adjust the figures to each other : an artist who lays out ground in Kent's manner, has an additional task, which is to adjust his figures to the several varieties of the field.

One garden must be distinguished from a plurality ; and yet it is not obvious where in the unity of a garden consists. A notion of unity is indeed suggested from viewing a garden surrounding a palace, with views from each window, and walks leading to every corner. But there may be a garden without a house. In this case, I must pronounce, that what makes it one-garden, is the unity of design, every single spot appearing part of a whole. The gardens of Versailles, properly expressed in the plural number, being no fewer than sixteen, are indeed all of them connected with the palace, but have scarce any mutual connection : they appear not like parts of one whole, but rather like small gardens in contiguity. Were these gardens at some distance from each other, they would have a better effect. Their junction breeds confusion

fusion of ideas, and upon the whole gives less pleasure than would be felt in a slower succession.

Regularity is required in that part of a garden which joins the dwelling-house; for being considered as a more immediate accessory, it ought to partake the regularity of the principal object \*. But in proportion to the distance from the house considered as

\* The influence of this connection surpassing all bounds, is visible in many gardens, left in their original form of horizontal plains forc'd with great labour and expence, perpendicular faces of earth supported with massy stone walls, terrace-walks in stages one above another, regular ponds and canals without the least motion, and the whole surrounded, like a prison, with high walls excluding every external object. At first view it may puzzle one to account for a taste running cross to nature in every particular. But nothing happens without a cause. Perfect regularity and uniformity are required in a house; and this idea is extended to its accessory the garden, especially if it be a small spot incapable of grandeur or much variety. The house is regular, so must the garden be: the floors of the house are horizontal, and the garden must have the same position: in the house we are protected from every intruding eye, so must we be in the garden. This, it must be confessed, is carrying the notion of resemblance very far. But where reason and taste are laid asleep, nothing is more common than to carry resemblance beyond proper bounds.

as it were, upon objects of which we had no expectation.

As gardening is not an inventive art, but an imitation of nature, or rather nature itself ornamented; it follows necessarily, that every thing unnatural ought to be rejected with disdain. Statues of wild beasts vomiting water, a common ornament in gardens, prevails in those of Versailles. Is this ornament in a good taste? A *jet d'eau*, being purely artificial, may, without disgust, be tortured into a thousand shapes: but a representation of what really exists in nature, admits not any unnatural circumstance. These statues therefore in the gardens of Versailles must be condemned: and yet so insensible has the artist been to just imitation, as to have display'd his vicious taste without the least colour or disguise. A lifeless statue of an animal pouring out water, may be endured without much disgust. But here the lions and wolves are put in violent action: each has seized its prey, a deer or a lamb, in act to devour. And yet, instead of extended claws and open mouth, the whole, as by a hocus-pocus trick, is converted

verted into a different scene : the lion, forgetting his prey, pours out water plentifully ; and the deer, forgetting its danger, performs the same operation ; a representation not less absurd than that in the opera, where Alexander the Great, after mounting the wall of a town besieged, turns about and entertains his army with a song.

In gardening, every lively exhibition of what is beautiful in nature has a fine effect : on the other hand, distant and faint imitations are displeasing to every one of taste. The cutting evergreens in the shape of animals, is a very ancient practice ; as appears from the epistles of Pliny, who seems to be a great admirer of this puerile conceit. The propensity to imitation gave birth to this practice ; and has supported it wonderfully long, considering how faint and insipid the imitation is. But the vulgar, great and small, devoid of taste, are entertained with the oddness and singularity of a resemblance, however distant, betwixt a tree and an animal. An attempt, in the gardens of Versailles, to imi-  
tate

tate a grove of trees by a group of *jets d'eau*, appears; for the same reason, not less ridiculous.

In laying out a garden, every thing trivial or whimsical ought to be avoided. Is a labyrinth then to be justified? It is a mere conceit, like that of composing verses in the shape of an axe or an egg. The walks and hedges may be agreeable; but in the form of a labyrinth, they serve to no end but to puzzle. A riddle is a conceit not so mean; because the solution is a proof of sagacity, which affords no aid in tracing a labyrinth.

The gardens of Versailles, executed with infinite expence by men at that time in high repute, are a lasting monument of a taste the most vicious and depraved. The faults above mentioned, instead of being avoided, are chosen as beauties, and multiplied without end. Nature, it would seem, was deemed too vulgar to be imitated in the works of a magnificent monarch; and for that reason preference was given to things unnatural, which probably were mistaken for supernatural. I have often amused

mused myself with a fanciful resemblance betwixt these gardens and the Arabian tales. Each of them is a performance intended for the amusement of a great king: in the sixteen gardens of Versailles there is no unity of design, more than in the thousand and one Arabian tales: and, lastly, they are equally unnatural; groves of *jets d'eau*, statues of animals conversing in the manner of *Æsop*, water issuing out of the mouths of wild beasts, give an impression of fairy-land and witchcraft, not less than diamond-palaces, invisible rings, spells and incantations.

A straight road is the most agreeable, because it shortens the journey. But in an embellished field, a straight walk has an air of stiffness and confinement: and at any rate is less agreeable than a winding or waving walk; for in surveying the beauties of a fine field, we love to roam from place to place at freedom. Winding walks have another advantage: at every step they open new views. In short, the walks in a field intended for entertainment, ought not to have any appearance of a road. My intention

tion is not to make a journey, but to feast my eye with the beauties of art and nature. This rule excludes not long straight openings terminating upon distant objects. These, beside variety, never fail to raise an emotion of grandeur, by extending in appearance the size of the field. An opening without a terminating object, soon closes upon the eye : but an object, at whatever distance, continues the opening ; and deludes the spectator into a conviction, that the trees which confine the view are continued till they join the object. Straight walks also in recesses do extremely well : they vary the scenery, and are favourable to meditation.

An avenue ought not to be directed in a straight line upon a dwelling-house : better far an oblique approach in a waving line, with single trees and other scattered objects interposed. In a direct approach, the first appearance continues the same to the end : we see a house at a distance, and we see it all along in the same spot without any variety. In an oblique approach, the intervening objects put the house seemingly  
in



An motion: it moves with the passenger, and appears to direct its course so as hospitably to intercept him. An oblique approach contributes also to variety: the house being seen successively in different directions, takes on at every step a new figure.

A garden on a flat ought to be highly and variously ornamented, in order to occupy the mind and prevent its regretting the insipidity of an uniform plain. Artificial mounts in this view are common: but no person has thought of an artificial walk elevated high above the plain. Such a walk is airy, and tends to elevate the mind: it extends and varies the prospect: and it makes the plain, seen from a height, appear more agreeable.

Whether should a ruin be in the Gothic or Grecian form? In the former, I say; because it exhibits the triumph of time over strength, a melancholy but not unpleasant thought. A Grecian ruin suggests rather the triumph of barbarity over taste, a gloomy and discouraging thought.

Fountains are seldom in a good taste. Statues of animals vomiting water, which

prevail every where, stand condemned. A statue of a whale spouting water upward from its head, would in one sense be natural, as whales of a certain species have that power. The design however would scarce be relished, because its singularity would give it the appearance of being unnatural. There is another reason against it, that the figure of a whale is in itself not agreeable. In the many fountains in and about Rome, statues of fishes are frequently employ'd to support a large basin of water. This unnatural conceit cannot be otherwise explained, than by the connection betwixt water and the fish that swim in it; which by the way is a proof of the influence that even the flighter connections have on the mind. The only good design for a fountain I have met with, is what follows. In an artificial rock, rugged and abrupt, there is a cavity out of sight at the top: the water, convey'd to it by a pipe, pours or trickles down the broken parts of the rock, and is collected into a basin at the foot: it is so contrived, as to make the water fall in sheets or in rills at pleasure.

Hitherto

Hitherto a garden has been treated as a work intended solely for pleasure, or, in other words, for giving impressions of intrinsic beauty. What comes next in order is the beauty of a garden destined for use, termed *relative beauty*\*; and this branch shall be dispatched in a few words. In gardening, luckily, relative beauty need never stand in opposition to intrinsic beauty. All the ground that can be requisite for use, makes but a small proportion of an ornamented field; and may be put in any corner without obstructing the disposition of the capital parts. At the same time, a kitchen-garden or an orchard is susceptible of intrinsic beauty; and may be so artfully disposed among the other parts, as by variety and contrast to contribute to the beauty of the whole. In this respect, architecture is far more intricate, as will be seen immediately: for there, it being often requisite to blend intrinsic and relative beauty in the same building, it becomes a difficult task to attain both in any perfection.

\* See these terms defined, chap. 3.

As gardening is brought to greater perfection in China than in any other known country, an account of the means practised by Chinese artists to inspire all the various emotions of gardening, will be a fine illustration of the foregoing doctrine. In general, it is an indispensable law with them, never to deviate from nature: but in order to produce that degree of variety which is pleasing, every method is used that is consistent with nature. Nature is strictly imitated in the banks of their artificial lakes and rivers; which sometimes are bare and gravelly, sometimes covered with wood quite to the brink of the water. To flat spots adorned with flowers and shrubs, are opposed others steep and rocky. We see meadows covered with cattle; rice-grounds that run into the lakes; groves into which enter navigable creeks and rivulets. These generally conduct to some interesting object, a magnificent building, terraces cut in a mountain, a cascade, a grotto, an artificial rock, and other such inventions. Their artificial rivers are generally serpentine; sometimes narrow, noisy, and rapid; sometimes deep,

deep, broad, and slow : and to make the scene still more active, mills and other moving machines are often erected. In the lakes are interspersed islands ; some barren, surrounded with rocks and shoals ; others enriched with every thing that art and nature can furnish. Even in their cascades they avoid regularity, as forcing nature out of its course : the waters are seen bursting out from among the caverns and windings of the artificial rocks ; here an impetuous cataract, there many lesser falls : and in its passage, the water is often impeded by trees and heaps of stones, that seem brought down by the violence of the current. Straight lines, generally avoided, are sometimes indulged, in order to take the advantage of any interesting object at a distance, by directing openings upon it.

Sensible of the influence of contrast, the Chinese artists deal in sudden transitions, and in opposing to each other, forms, colours, and shades. The eye is conducted, from limited to extensive views, and from lakes and rivers to plains, hills, and woods : to dark and gloomy colours, are opposed the

the more brilliant: the different masses of light and shade are disposed in such a manner, as to render the composition distinct in its parts, and striking on the whole. In plantations, the trees are artfully mixed according to their shape and colour; those of spreading branches with the pyramidal, and the light with the deep green. They even introduce decay'd trees, some erect, and some half out of the ground \*. In order to heighten contrast, much bolder strokes are risked. They sometimes introduce rough rocks, dark caverns, trees ill formed and seemingly rent by tempests, or blasted by lightning, a building in ruins or half consumed by fire. But to relieve the mind from the harshness of such objects, they are always succeeded by the sweetest and most beautiful scenes.

The Chinese study to give play to the imagination. They hide the termination of their lakes: the view of a cascade is fre-

\* Taste has suggested to Kent the same artifice. The placing a decay'd tree properly, contributes to contrast; and also produces a sort of pity, grounded on an imaginary personification.

quently

quently interrupted by trees, through which are seen obscurely the waters as they fall. The imagination once roused, is disposed to magnify every object.

Nothing is more studied in Chinese gardens than to raise wonder or surprise. In scenes calculated for that end, every thing appears like fairy-land; a torrent, for example, convey'd under ground, producing an uncommon sound that puzzles a stranger to guess what it may be; and, to increase our wonder by multiplying such uncommon sounds, the rocks and buildings are contrived with cavities and interstices. Sometimes one is led insensibly into dark caverns, terminating unexpectedly in a landscape enriched with all that nature affords the most delicious. At other times, beautiful walks insensibly conduct us to a rough uncultivated field, where bushes briers and stones interrupt the passage: when we look about for an outlet, some rich prospect unexpectedly opens to view. Another artifice is, to obscure some capital part by trees or other interposed objects: our curiosity is raised to know what lies beyond; and after a few steps,

steps, we are greatly surprised with some scene totally different from what was expected.

I close these cursory observations upon gardening, with a remark that must touch every reader. Rough uncultivated ground, dismal to the eye, inspires peevishness and discontent. May not this be one cause of the harsh manners of savages? In a field richly ornamented, are collected beautiful objects of various kinds. Such a field displays in full lustre, the goodness of the Deity and the ample provision he has made for our happiness; which must fill every spectator, with gratitude to his Maker and with benevolence to his fellow-creatures. Other fine arts may be perverted to excite irregular, and even vicious, emotions: but gardening, which inspires the purest and most refined pleasures, cannot but promote every good affection. The gaiety and harmony of mind it produceth, must naturally incline the spectator to communicate his satisfaction to others by acts of humanity and kindness.

Having



Having finished what occurred on gardening, I proceed to rules and observations that more peculiarly concern architecture. Architecture being an useful as well as a fine art, buildings and parts of buildings must be distinguished into three kinds, *viz.* what are intended for utility solely, what for ornament solely, and what for both. A building intended for utility solely, such as detached offices, ought in every part to correspond precisely to that intention. The least deviation from use, though contributing to ornament, will be disagreeable. For every work of use being considered as a means to an end, its perfection as a means is the capital circumstance; and every other beauty, in opposition, is neglected as improper and impertinent. In things again intended for ornament, such as pillars, obelisks, triumphal arches, beauty solely ought to be regarded. A Heathen temple must be considered as merely ornamental; for being dedicated to some deity, and not intended for habitation, it is susceptible of any figure and any embellishment that fancy can suggest and beauty require. The great diffi-

culty of contrivance, respects buildings that are intended for pleasure as well as for use. These ends, employing different and often opposite means, are with difficulty reconciled. In palaces, and other buildings sufficiently extensive to admit a variety of useful contrivance, regularity justly takes the lead. But in dwelling-houses that are too small for variety of contrivance, utility ought to prevail; neglecting regularity so far as it stands in opposition to convenience.

Intrinsic and relative beauty being founded on different principles, must be handled separately; and I begin with relative beauty, as of the greater importance.

The proportions of a door, are determined by the use to which it is destined. The door of a dwelling-house, which ought to correspond to the human size, is confined to seven or eight feet in height, and three or four in breadth. The proportions proper for the door of a barn or coach-house, are widely different. Another consideration enters. To study intrinsic beauty in a coach-house or barn, intended merely for use, is obviously improper. But a dwelling-  
ing-

ing-house may admit ornaments; and the principal door of a palace demands all the grandeur that is consistent with the foregoing proportions dictated by utility. It ought to be elevated and approached by steps; and it may be adorned with pillars supporting an architrave, or in any other beautiful manner. The door of a church ought to be wide, in order to afford an easy passage for a multitude. The wideness, at the same time, regulates the height, as will appear by and by. The size of windows ought to be proportioned to that of the room they serve with light; for if the apperture be not sufficiently large to convey light to every corner, the room is dark and gloomy. Steps of stairs ought to be accommodated to the human figure, without regarding any other proportion: these steps accordingly are the same in large and in small buildings, because both are inhabited by men of the same size.

I proceed to consider intrinsic beauty blended with that which is relative. A cube in itself is more agreeable than a parallelopipedon, which will constantly hold in small

figures. But a large building in the form a cube, appears lumpish and heavy; while the other figure, set on its smaller base, is by its elevation more agreeable: and hence the beauty of a Gothic tower. But let us suppose this parallelopipedon destin'd for a dwelling-house, to make way for relative beauty. Here utility prevails over elevation; and a parallelopipedon, inconvenient by its height, is set upon its larger base. The loftiness is gone; but that loss is more than compensated by additional convenience; and for that reason the form of a building spread more upon the ground than raised in height, is always preferred for a dwelling-house, without excepting even the most sumptuous palace.

With respect to the divisions within, utility requires that the rooms be rectangular; for otherwise void spaces will be left of no use. A hexagonal figure leaves no void spaces; but then it determines the rooms to be all of one size, which is extremely inconvenient. A cube will at first be pronounced the most agreeable figure; and this may hold in a room of a moderate size.

But

But in a very large room, utility requires a different figure. The chief convenience of a great room, is unconfined motion. This directs us to the greatest length that can be obtained. But a square room of a great size is inconvenient, by removing far from the hand, chairs and tables, which, when unemploy'd, must be ranged along the sides of the room. Utility therefore requires a large room to be a parallelogram. This figure, at the same time, is the best calculated for receiving light; because, to avoid cross-light, all the windows ought to be in one wall; and if the opposite wall be at such distance as not to be fully lighted, the room must be obscure. The height of a room exceeding nine or ten feet, has little or no relation to utility; and therefore proportion is the only rule for determining the height when above that number of feet.

As all artists who deal in the beautiful are naturally prone to entertain the eye, they have great opportunity to exert their taste upon palaces and sumptuous buildings, where, as above observed, intrinsic beauty ought to have the ascendant over that which

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is relative. But such propensity is unhappy with respect to private dwelling-houses; because in these, relative beauty cannot be display'd in any perfection, without abandoning intrinsic beauty. There is no opportunity for great variety of form in a small house; and in an edifice of this kind, internal convenience has not hitherto been happily adjusted to external regularity. I am apt to believe, that an accurate coincidence here, is beyond the reach of art. And yet architects always split upon this rock; for they never will give over attempting to reconcile these two incompatibles. How else should it be accounted for, that of the endless variety of private dwelling-houses, there is not one to be found, that is generally agreed upon as a good pattern? The unwearied propensity to make a house regular as well as convenient, forces the architect, in some articles, to sacrifice convenience to regularity, and in others, regularity to convenience. By this means, the house, which turns out neither regular nor convenient, never fails to displease. The faults are obvious.

vious, and the difficulty of doing better is known to the artist only \*.

Nothing can be more evident, than that the form of a dwelling-house ought to be suited to the climate; and yet no error is more common, than to copy in Britain the form of Italian houses; not forgetting even those parts that are purposely contrived for air, and for excluding the sun. I shall give one or two instances. A colonnade along the front of a building, hath a fine effect in Greece and Italy, by producing coolness and obscurity, agreeable properties in warm and luminous climates. The cold climate of Britain is altogether averse to this ornament. A colonnade therefore, can never be proper in this country, unless when employ'd to communicate with a detached building. Again, a logio opening the house to the north, contrived in Italy for gathering cool air, is, if possible, still more improper for this climate. Scarce endurable in summer, it, in

\* " Houses are built to live in, and not to look on. Therefore let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had."

*Lo. Verulam, essay 45.*

winter,

winter, exposes the house to the bitter blasts of the north, and to every shower of snow and rain.

Having discussed what appeared necessary to be said upon relative beauty, singly considered, or in combination with intrinsic beauty, the next step is, to view architecture as one of the fine arts, and to examine those buildings and parts of buildings that are solely calculated to please the eye. In the works of nature, grand and magnificent, variety prevails. The timid hand of art, is guided by rule and compass. Hence it is, that in works which imitate nature, the great art is to hide every appearance of art; which is done by avoiding regularity and indulging variety. But in works of art that are original and not imitative, such as architecture, strict regularity and uniformity ought to be studied so far as consistent with utility.

In buildings intended to please the eye, proportion is not less essential than regularity and uniformity; for we are so framed by nature, as to be pleased equally with each of these. By many writers it is taken for granted, that in all the parts of a building there



there are certain strict proportions which please the eye ; precisely as there are certain strict proportions of sound which please the ear ; and that in both the slightest deviation is equally disagreeable. Others again seem to relish more a comparison betwixt proportion in numbers and proportion in quantity ; and hold that the same proportions are agreeable in both. The proportions, for example, of the numbers 16, 24, and 36 are agreeable ; and so, say they, are the proportions of a room, the height of which is 16 feet, the breadth 24, and the length 36. This point, with relation to the present subject, being of importance, the reader will examine it with attention and impartiality. To refute the notion of a resemblance betwixt musical proportions and those of architecture, it might be sufficient to observe in general, that the one is addressed to the ear, the other to the eye ; and that objects of different senses have no resemblance, nor indeed any relation to each other. But more particularly, what pleases the ear in harmony, is not the proportion of the strings of the instrument, but of the sounds that

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these strings produce. In architecture, on the contrary, it is the proportion of different quantities that pleases the eye, without the least relation to sound. Beside, were quantity here to be the sole ground of comparison, we have no reason to presume, that there is any natural analogy betwixt the proportions that please in a building and the proportions of strings that produce concordant sounds. I instance in particular an octave, the most complete of all concords. An octave is produced by two strings of the same tension and diameter, and as to length in the proportion of one to two. I do not know, that this proportion will be agreeable in any two parts of a building. I add, that concordant notes are produced by wind instruments, which, as to proportion, appear not to have even the slightest resemblance to a building.

With respect to the other notion instituting a comparison betwixt proportion in numbers and proportion in quantity, I urge, that number and quantity are so distinct from each other, as to afford no probability of any natural relation betwixt them. Quantity

tity is a real quality of every substance or body: number is not a real quality, but merely a conception that arises upon viewing a plurality of things in succession. Because an arithmetical proportion is agreeable in numbers, have we any reason to conclude that it must also be agreeable in quantity? At this rate, a geometrical proportion and many others, ought also to be agreeable in both. A certain proportion may coincide in both; and among an endless variety of proportions, it would be wonderful, if there never should be a coincidence. One example is given of this coincidence, in the numbers 16, 24, and 36; but to be convinced that it is merely accidental, we need but reflect, that the same proportions are not applicable to the external figure of a house, and far less to a column.

That we are framed by nature to relish proportion as well as regularity, is indisputable: but that agreeable proportion, like concord in sounds, is confined to certain precise measures, is not warranted by experience: on the contrary, we learn from experience, that various proportions are e-

qually agreeable, that proportion is never tied down to precise measures but admits more and less, and that we are not sensible of disproportion till the difference betwixt the quantities compared become the most striking circumstance. Columns evidently admit different proportions, equally agreeable. The case is the same in houses, rooms, and other parts of a building. And this opens an interesting reflection. The foregoing difference betwixt concord and proportion, is an additional instance of that admirable harmony which subsists among the several branches of the human frame. The ear is an accurate judge of sounds and of their smallest differences; and that concord in sounds should be regulated by accurate measures, is perfectly well suited to this accuracy of perception. The eye is more uncertain about the size of a large object, than of one that is small; and in different situations the same object appears of different sizes. Delicacy of feeling therefore with respect to proportion in quantities, would be an useless quality. It is much better ordered, that there should be such a latitude with  
respect

respect to agreeable proportions, as to correspond to the uncertainty of the eye with respect to quantity.

But this scene is too interesting to be passed over in a cursory view : all its beauties are not yet display'd. I proceed to observe, that to make the eye as delicate with respect to proportion as the ear is with respect to concord, would not only be an useless quality; but be the source of continual pain and uneasiness. I need go no farther for a proof than the very room I possess at present : every step I take, varies to me, in appearance, the proportion of the length and breadth. At that rate, I should not be happy but in one precise spot, where the proportion appears agreeable. Let me further observe, that it would be singular indeed, to find in the nature of man, any two principles in perpetual opposition to each other. This would precisely be the case, if proportion were circumscribed like concord ; for it would exclude all but one of those proportions that utility requires in different buildings, and in different parts of the same building.

It

It is ludicrous to observe all writers acknowledging the necessity of accurate proportions, and yet differing widely about them. Laying aside reasoning and philosophy, one fact universally agreed on ought to have undeceived them, that the same proportions which please in a model are not agreeable in a large building. A room 48 feet in length and 24 in breadth and height, is well proportioned; but a room 12 feet wide and high and 24 long, looks like a gallery.

Perrault, in his comparison of the ancients and moderns \*, is the only author who runs to the opposite extreme; maintaining, that the different proportions assigned to each order of columns are arbitrary, and that the beauty of these proportions is entirely the effect of custom. This bewrays ignorance of human nature, which evidently delights in proportion, as well as in regularity, order, and propriety. But without any acquaintance with human nature, a single reflection might have convinced him

\* p. 94.

of his error; that if these proportions had not originally been agreeable, they could not have been established by custom. If a thing be universal, it must be natural.

To illustrate the present point, I shall add a few examples of the agreeableness of different proportions. In a sumptuous edifice, the capital rooms ought to be large, for otherwise they will not be proportioned to the size of the building. On the other hand, a very large room in a small house, is disproportioned. But in things thus related, the mind requires not a precise or single proportion, rejecting all others; on the contrary, many different proportions are made equally welcome. It is only when a proportion becomes loose and distant, that the agreeableness abates, and at last vanisheth. In all buildings accordingly, we find rooms of different proportions equally agreeable, even where the proportion is not influenced by utility. With respect to the height of a room, the proportion it ought to bear to the length and breadth, is extremely arbitrary; and it cannot be otherwise, considering the uncertainty of the eye as to the height of a  
room,

room, when it exceeds 17 or 18 feet. In columns again, even architects must confess, that the proportion of height and thickness varies betwixt 8 diameters and 10, and that every proportion betwixt these two extremes is agreeable. But this is not all. There must certainly be a further variation of proportion, depending on the size of the column. A row of columns 10 feet high, and a row twice that height, require different proportions. The intercolumniations must also differ in proportion according to the height of the row.

Proportion of parts is not only itself a beauty, but is inseparably connected with a beauty of the first magnitude. Parts that in conjunction appear proportional, never fail separately to produce similar emotions; which existing together, are extremely pleasant, as I have had occasion to show\*. Thus a room of which the parts are all finely adjusted to each other, strikes us with the beauty of proportion. It produceth at the same time a pleasure far superior. The

\* Chap. 2. part 4.

length,



length, the breadth, the height, the windows, raise each of them separately an emotion. These emotions are similar; and though faint when felt separately, they produce in conjunction the emotion of concord or harmony, which is extremely pleasant. On the other hand, where the length of a room far exceeds the breadth, the mind comparing together parts so intimately connected, immediately perceives a disagreement or disproportion which disgusts. But this is not all. Viewing them separately, different emotions are produced, that of grandeur from the great length, and that of meanness or littleness from the small breadth, which in union are disagreeable by their discordance. Hence it is, that a long gallery, however convenient for exercise, is not an agreeable figure of a room. We consider it, like a stable, as destined for use, and expect not that in any other respect it should be agreeable.

Regularity and proportion are essential in buildings destined chiefly or solely to please the eye, because they are the means to produce intrinsic beauty. But a skilful artist

will not confine his view to regularity and proportion. He will also study propriety, which is perceived when the form and ornaments of a structure are suited to the purpose for which it is appointed. The sense of propriety dictates the following rule, That every building ought to have an expression corresponding to its destination. A palace ought to be sumptuous and grand; a private dwelling, neat and modest; a playhouse, gay and splendid; and a monument, gloomy and melancholy. A Heathen temple has a double destination: it is considered chiefly as a house dedicated to some divinity; and in that respect it ought to be grand, elevated, and magnificent: it is considered also as a place of worship; and in that respect it ought to be somewhat dark or gloomy; because dimness produces that tone of mind which is suited to humility and devotion. A Christian church is not considered as a house for the Deity, but merely a place of worship: it ought therefore to be decent and plain, without much ornament; a situation ought to be chosen, humble and retired; because the congregation, during  
worship,

worship, ought to be humble and disengaged from the world. Columns, beside their chief destination of being supports, contribute to that peculiar expression which the destination of a building requires: columns of different proportions, serve to express loftiness, lightness, &c. as well as strength. Situation also may contribute to expression: conveniency regulates the situation of a private dwelling-house; but, as I have had occasion to observe\*, the situation of a palace ought to be lofty.

And this leads me to examine, whether the situation of a great house, where the artist is limited in his choice, ought in any measure to regulate its form. The connection betwixt a great house and the neighbouring grounds, though not extremely intimate, demands however some congruity. It would, for instance, displease us to find an elegant building thrown away upon a wild uncultivated country: congruity requires a polished field for such a building; and beside the pleasure of congruity, the spectator

\* Chap. 10.

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looks little compared with the great canopy the sky. In the next place, when it recovers its grandeur, as it soon doth, it gives a diminutive appearance to the rest of the house: passing from it, every apartment looks little. This room therefore may be aptly compared to the swoln commencement of an epic poem.

*Bella per Ercathios plusquam civilia campos.*

In the third place, by its situation it serves only for a waiting-room, and a passage to the principal apartments. And yet undoubtedly, the room of the greatest size ought to be reserved for company. A great room, which enlarges the mind and gives a certain elevation to the spirits, is destined by nature for conversation. Rejecting therefore this form, I take a hint from the climax in writing for another form that appears more suitable. My plan is, first a handsome portico, proportioned to the size and fashion of the front: this portico leads into a waiting-room of a larger size; and this again to the great room,

room, all by a progression from small to great. If the house be very large, there may be space for the following suit of rooms; first, a portico; second, a passage within the house bounded by rows of columns on each side connected by arcades; third, an octagon room, or of any other figure, about the centre of the building; and, lastly, the great room.

Of all the emotions that can be raised by architecture, grandeur is that which has the greatest influence on the mind. It ought therefore to be the chief study of the artist, to raise this emotion in great buildings. But it seems unhappy for architecture, that it is necessarily governed by certain principles opposite to grandeur: the direct effect of regularity and proportion, is to make a building appear less than it is in reality. Any invention to reconcile these with grandeur, would be a capital improvement in architecture.

Next of ornaments, which contribute greatly to give buildings a peculiar expression. It has been a doubt with me, whether a building can regularly admit any ornament

ament but what is useful, or at least appears to be useful. But considering the double aim of architecture, a fine as well as an useful art, there is no good reason why ornaments may not be added to please the eye without any relation to use. This liberty is allowed in poetry, painting, and gardening, and why not in architecture considered as a fine art? A private dwelling-house, it is true, and other edifices where use is the chief aim, admit not regularly any ornament but what has the appearance, at least, of use: but temples, triumphal arches, and other buildings intended chiefly or solely for show, may be highly ornamented.

This suggests a division of ornaments into three kinds, *viz.* ornaments that are beautiful without relation to use, such as statues in niches, vases, basso or alto reliefs; next, things in themselves not beautiful, but possessing the beauty of utility by imposing on the spectator, and appearing to be of use, blind windows for example; the third kind is, where the thing is in itself beautiful, and also takes on the appearance  
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of use; the case of a pilaster. With respect to the second, it is an egregious blunder, to contrive the ornament so as to make it appear useless. . . If a blind window therefore be necessary for regularity, it ought to be so disguised, as not to be distinguished from the real windows. If it appear to be a blind window, it is disgusting, as a vain attempt to supply the want of invention. It shows the irregularity in a stronger light; by signifying that a window ought to be there in point of regularity, but that the architect had not skill sufficient to connect external regularity with internal convenience.

From ornaments in general, we descend to a pillar, the chief ornament in great buildings. The destination of a pillar is to support, really or in appearance, another part termed *the architrave*. With respect to the form of this ornament, I observe, that a circle is a more agreeable figure than a square, a globe than a cube, and a cylinder than a parallelopipedon. This last, in the language of architecture, is saying, that a column is a more agreeable figure than a pilaster,



**pilaster.** For that reason, it ought to be preferred, all other circumstances being equal. Another reason concurs, that a column annexed to a wall, which is a plain surface, makes a greater variety than a pilaster. There is an additional reason for rejecting pilasters in the external front of a building, arising from a principle unfolded above\*, *viz.* a remarkable tendency in the mind of man, to advance every thing to its perfection as well as to its final issue. If I see a thing obscurely in a dim light, and by disjointed parts, my curiosity is roused, and prompts me, out of the disjointed parts to compose an entire whole. I suppose it to be, for example, a horse. My eye-sight being obedient to this conjecture, I immediately perceive a horse, almost as distinctly as in day-light. This principle is applicable to the case in hand. The most superb front, at a great distance, appears a plain surface: approaching gradually, we begin to perceive inequalities: these inequalities, advancing a few steps more, take

\* Chap. 8.

on the appearance of pillars ; but whether round or square, we are uncertain : our curiosity anticipating our progress, cannot rest in suspense : we naturally suppose the most complete pillar, or that which is the most agreeable to the eye ; and we immediately perceive, or seem to perceive, a number of columns : if upon a near approach we find pilasters only, the disappointment makes these pilasters appear disagreeable ; when abstracted from that circumstance, they would only have appeared somewhat less agreeable. But as this deception cannot happen in the inner front inclosing a court, I see no reason for excluding pilasters there, when there is any reason for preferring them before columns.

With respect now to the parts of a column, a bare uniform cylinder without base or capital, appears naked and scarce agreeable : it ought therefore to have some finishing at the top and at the bottom. Hence the three chief parts of a column, the shaft, the base, and the capital. Nature undoubtedly requires a certain proportion among these parts, but not limited within precise

precise bounds. I suspect that the proportions in use have been influenced in some degree by the human figure; the capital being conceived as the head, the base as the feet. With respect to the base indeed, the principle of utility interposes to vary it from the human figure: the base must be so proportioned to the whole, as to give the column the appearance of stability.

In architecture as well as in gardening, contradictory expressions ought to be avoided. Firmness and solidity are the proper expressions of a pedestal: carved work, on the contrary, ought to be light and delicate. A pedestal therefore, whether of a column or of a statue, ought to be sparingly ornamented: the ancients never ventured any bolder ornament than the basso-relievo.

To succeed in allegorical or emblematic ornaments, is no slight effort of genius; for it is extremely difficult to dispose them so in a building as to produce any good effect. The mixing them with realities, makes a miserable jumble of truth and fiction\*. In a

\* See chap. 20. sect. 5.

basso-relievo on Antonin's pillar, rain obtained by the prayers of a Christian legion, is expressed by joining to the group of soldiers a rainy Jupiter, with water in abundance running from his head and beard. De Piles, fond of the conceit, carefully informs his reader, that he must not take this for a real Jupiter, but for a symbol which among the Pagans signified rain : an emblem ought not to make a part of the group representing real objects or real events, but be detached from it, so as even at first view to appear an emblem. But this is not all, nor the chief point. Every emblem ought to be rejected that is not clearly expressive of its meaning : if it be in any degree obscure, it never can be relished. The temples of Ancient and Modern Virtue in the gardens of Stow, appear not at first view emblematical ; and when we are informed that they are so, it is not easy to gather their meaning. The spectator sees one temple in full repair, another in ruins : but without an explanatory inscription, he may guess, but cannot be certain, that the former being dedicated to Ancient Virtue,

Virtue, the latter to Modern Virtue, are intended a satire upon the present times. On the other hand, a trite emblem, like a trite simile, is disgusting \*. Nor ought an emblem more than a simile to be founded on low or familiar objects; for if the objects be not agreeable, as well as their meaning, the emblem upon the whole will not be relished. A room in a dwelling-house containing a monument to a deceased friend, is dedicated to Melancholy. Its furniture is a clock that strikes every minute to signify how swiftly time passes: upon the monument, weeping figures and other hackney'd ornaments commonly found upon tomb-stones, with a stuff'd raven in a corner: verses on death, and other serious subjects, inscribed all around. The objects are too familiar, and the artifice too apparent, to produce the intended effect.

The statue of Moses striking a rock from which water actually issues, is also in a false taste; for it is mixing reality with representation: Moses himself may bring

\* See chap. 8.

water out of the rock, but this miracle is too much for his statue. The same objection lies against a cascade where we see the statue of a water-god pouring out of his urn real water.

It is observed above of gardening, that it contributes to rectitude of manners, by inspiring gaiety and benevolence. I add another observation, That both gardening and architecture contribute to the same end, by inspiring neatness and elegance. It is observed in Scotland, that even a turnpike-road has some influence of this kind upon the low people in the neighbourhood. They acquire a taste for regularity and neatness; which is display'd first upon their yards and little inclosures, and next within doors. A taste for regularity and neatness thus gathering strength, comes insensibly to be extended to dress, and even to behaviour and manners.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XXV.

## Standard of Taste.

“**T**HAT there is no disputing about “taste”, meaning taste in its most extensive sense, is a saying so generally received as to have become a proverb. One thing indeed is evident, that if the proverb hold true with respect to any one external sense, it must hold true with respect to all. If the pleasures of the palate disdain a comparative trial and reject all criticism, the pleasures of touch, of smell, of sound, and even of sight, must be equally privileged. At this rate, a man is not within the reach of censure, even where, insensible to beauty, grandeur, or elegance, he prefers the Saracen’s head upon a sign-post before the best tablature of Raphael, or a rude Gothic tower before the finest Grecian building: nor where he prefers the smell of a rotten

rotten carcases before that of the most odorous flower: nor jarring discords before the most exquisite harmony.

But we must not stop here. If the pleasures of external sense be exempted from criticism, why not every one of our pleasures, from whatever source derived? If taste in the proper sense of the word cannot be disputed, there is as little room for disputing it in its figurative sense. The proverb accordingly comprehends both; and in that large sense may be resolved into the following general proposition, That with respect to the sensitive part of our nature, by which some objects are agreeable some disagreeable, there is not such a thing as a *good* or *bad*, a *right* or *wrong*; that every man's taste is to himself an ultimate standard without appeal; and consequently that there is no ground of censure against any one, if such a one there be, who prefers Blackmore before Homer, selfishness before benevolence, or cowardice before magnanimity.

The proverb in the foregoing instances, is indeed carried very far. It seems difficult, however,



however, to sap its foundation, or with success to attack it from any quarter. For in comparing the various tastes of individuals, it is not obvious what standard must be appealed to. Is not every man equally a judge of what is agreeable or disagreeable to himself? Doth it not seem odd, and perhaps absurd, that a man *ought not* to be pleased when he is, or that he *ought* to be pleased when he is not?

This reasoning may perplex, but, in contradiction to sense and feeling, will never afford conviction. A man of taste must necessarily feel the reasoning to be false, however unqualified to detect the fallacy. At the same time, though no man of taste will subscribe to the proverb as holding true in every case, no man will venture to affirm that it holds true in no case. Subjects there are undoubtedly, that we may like or dislike indifferently, without any imputation upon our taste. Were a philosopher to make a scale for human pleasures with many divisions, in order that the value of each pleasure may be denoted by the place it occupies, he would not think of making di-

visions without end, but would rank together many pleasures arising perhaps from different objects, either as being equally valuable, or differing so imperceptibly as to make a separation unnecessary. Nature hath taken this course, so far as appears to the generality of mankind. There may be subdivisions without end; but we are only sensible of the grosser divisions, comprehending each of them many pleasures of various kinds. To these the proverb is applicable in the strictest sense; for with respect to pleasures of the same rank, what ground can there be for preferring one before another? If a preference in fact be given by any individual, it cannot be taste, but custom, imitation, or some peculiarity of mind.

Nature in her scale of pleasures, has been sparing of divisions: she hath wisely and benevolently filled every division with many pleasures; in order that individuals may be contented with their own lot, without envying the happiness of others: many hands must be employ'd to procure us the conveniences of life; and it is necessary that the  
different

different branches of business, whether more or less agreeable, be filled with hands. A taste too nice and delicate, would obstruct this plan; for it would crowd some employments, leaving others, not less useful, totally neglected. In our present condition, happy it is, that the plurality are not delicate in their choice. They fall in readily with the occupations, pleasures, food, and company, that fortune throws in their way; and if at first there be any displeasing circumstance, custom soon makes it easy.

The proverb will be admitted so far as it regards the particulars now explained. But when apply'd in general to every subject of taste, the difficulties to be encountered are insuperable. What shall we say, in particular, as to the difficulty that arises from human nature itself? Do we not talk of a good and a bad taste? of a right and a wrong taste? and upon that supposition, do we not, with great confidence, censure writers, painters, architects, and every one who deals in the fine arts? Are such criticisms absurd and void of foundation? Have the foregoing expressions, familiar in all lan-

guages and among all people, no sort of meaning? This can hardly be: what is universal must have a foundation in nature. If we can reach this foundation, the standard of taste will no longer be a secret.

All living creatures are by nature distributed into classes; the individuals of each, however diversified by slighter differences, having a wonderful uniformity in their capital parts internal and external. Each class is distinguishable from others by an external form; and not less distinguishable by an internal constitution, manifested by certain powers, feelings, desires, and actions, peculiar to the individuals of each class. Thus each class may be conceived to have a common nature, which, in framing the individuals belonging to the class, is taken for a model or standard.

Independent altogether of experience, men have a sense or conviction of a common nature or standard, not only in their own species, but in every species of animals. And hence it is a matter of wonder, to find any individual deviating from the common nature of the species, whether in its internal

nal or external construction: a child born with an aversion to its mother's milk, is a matter of wonder, not less than if born without a mouth, or with more than one \*.

With respect to this common nature or standard, we are so constituted as to conceive it to be *perfect* or *right*; and consequently that individuals *ought* to be made conformable to it. Every remarkable deviation accordingly from the standard, makes an impression upon us of imperfection, irregularity, or disorder: it is disagreeable and raises in us a painful emotion: monstrous births, exciting the curiosity of a philosopher, fail not at the same time to excite aversion in a high degree.

Lastly, we have a conviction, that the common nature of man is invariable not less than universal: we conceive that it hath no relation to time nor to place; but that it will be the same hereafter as at present, and as it was in time past; the same among all nations and in all corners of the

\* See Essays on morality and natural religion, part 1. essay 2. ch. 1.

earth. Nor are we deceived: giving allowance for the difference of culture and gradual refinement of manners, the fact corresponds to our conviction.

This conviction of a common nature or standard, and of its perfection, is the foundation of morality; and accounts clearly for that remarkable conception we have, of a right and a wrong taste in morals. It accounts not less clearly for the conception we have of a right and a wrong taste in the fine arts. A person who rejects objects generally agreeable, and delights in objects generally disagreeable, is condemned as a monster: we disapprove his taste as bad or wrong; and we have a clear conception that he deviates from the common standard. If man were so framed as not to have any notion of a common standard, the proverb mentioned in the beginning would hold universally, not only in the fine arts but in morals: upon that supposition, the taste of every man, with respect to both, would to himself be an ultimate standard. But the conviction of a common standard being made a part of our nature, we intuitively conceive a taste to be right or good if conformable

formable to the common standard, and wrong or bad if disconformable.

No particular concerning human nature is more universal, than the uneasiness a man feels when in matters of importance his opinions are rejected by others. Why should difference in opinion create uneasiness, more than difference in stature, in countenance, or in dress? The sense of a common standard is the only principle that can explain this mystery. Every man, generally speaking, taking it for granted that his opinions agree with the common sense of mankind, is therefore disgusted with those of a contrary opinion, not as differing from him, but as differing from the common standard. Hence in all disputes, we find the parties, each of them equally, appealing constantly to the common sense of mankind as the ultimate rule or standard. Were it not for this standard, of which the conviction is universal, I cannot discover the slightest foundation for rancor or animosity when persons differ in essential points more than in points purely indifferent. With respect to the latter, which are not supposed to be regulated  
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by any standard, individuals are permitted to think for themselves with impunity. The same liberty is not indulged with respect to the former : for what reason, other than that the standard by which these are regulated, ought, as we judge, to produce an uniformity of opinion in all men? In a word, to this sense of a common standard must be wholly attributed the pleasure we take in those who espouse the same principles and opinions with ourselves, as well as the aversion we have at those who differ from us. In matters left indifferent by the standard, we find nothing of the same pleasure or pain. A bookish man, unless sway'd by convenience, relisheth not the contemplative more than the active part of mankind : his friends and companions are chosen indifferently out of either class. A painter consorts with a poet or musician, as readily as with those of his own art ; and one is not the more agreeable to me for loving beef, as I do, nor the less agreeable for preferring mutton.

I have said, that my disgust is raised, not by differing from me, but by differing from  
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from what I judge to be the common standard. This point, being of importance, ought to be firmly established. Men, it is true, are prone to flatter themselves, by taking it for granted, that their opinions and their taste are in all respects agreeable to the common standard. But there may be exceptions, and experience shows there are some. There are instances without number, of persons who cling to the grosser amusements of gaming, eating, drinking, without having any relish for more elegant pleasures, such, for example, as are afforded by the fine arts. Yet these very persons, talking the same language with the rest of mankind, pronounce in favour of the more elegant pleasures: they invariably approve those who have a more refined taste, and are ashamed of their own as low and sensual. It is in vain to think of giving a reason for this singular impartiality against self, other than the authority of the common standard. Every individual of the human species, the most groveling not excepted, hath a natural sense of the dignity of human nature\*.

\* See chap. II.

Hence every man is esteemed and respected in proportion to the dignity of his character, sentiments, and actions. And from the instances now given we discover, that the sense of the dignity of human nature is so vigorous, as even to prevail over self-partiality, and to make us despise our own taste compared with the more elevated taste of others.

In our sense of a common standard and in the pleasure individuals give us by their conformity to it, a curious final cause is discovered. An uniformity of taste and sentiment in matters of importance, forms an intimate connection among individuals, and is a great blessing in the social state. With respect to morals in particular, unhappy it would be for mankind did not this uniformity prevail : it is necessary that the actions of all men be uniform with respect to right and wrong ; and in order to uniformity of action, it is necessary that all men think the same way in these particulars : if they differ through any irregular bias, the common sense of mankind is appealed to as the rule ; and it is the province of judges,  
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in matters especially of equity, to apply that rule. The same uniformity, it is yielded, is not so strictly necessary in other matters of taste: men, though connected in general as members of the same state; are, by birth, office, or occupation, separated and distinguished into different classes; and are thereby qualified for different amusements: variety of taste, so far, is no obstruction to the general connection. But with respect to the more capital pleasures, such as are best enjoy'd in common, uniformity of taste is necessary for two great ends, first to connect individuals the more intimately in the social life, and next to advance these pleasures to their highest perfection. With respect to the first, if instead of a common taste, every man had a taste peculiar to himself, leading him to place his happiness upon things indifferent or perhaps disagreeable to others, these capital pleasures could not be enjoy'd in common: every man would pursue his own happiness by flying from others; and instead of a natural tendency to union, remarkable in the human species, union would be our

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aversion.

aversion: man would not be a consistent being: his interest would lead him to society, and his taste would draw him from it. The other end will be best explained by entering upon particulars. Uniformity of taste gives opportunity for sumptuous and elegant buildings, for fine gardens, and extensive embellishments, which please universally. Works of this nature could never have reached any degree of perfection, had every man a taste peculiar to himself: there could not be any suitable reward, either of profit or honour, to encourage men of genius to labour in such works. The same uniformity of taste is equally necessary to perfect the arts of music, sculpture, and painting; and to support the expence they require after they are brought to perfection. Nature is in every particular consistent with herself. We are formed by nature to have a high relish for the fine arts, which are a great source of happiness, and extremely friendly to virtue. We are, at the same time, formed with an uniformity of taste, to furnish proper objects for this high relish: if uniformity of taste did not prevail, the fine

fine-arts could never have made any figure.

Thus, upon a sense common to the species, is erected a standard of taste, which without hesitation is apply'd to the taste of every individual. This standard, ascertaining what actions are right what wrong, what proper what improper, hath enabled moralists to establish rules for our conduct from which no person is allowed to swerve. We have the same standard for ascertaining in all the fine arts, what is beautiful or ugly, high or low, proper or improper, proportioned or disproportioned. And here, as in morals, we justly condemn every taste that swerves from what is thus ascertained by the common standard.

The discovery of a rule or standard for trying the taste of individuals in the fine arts as well as in morals, is a considerable advance, but completes not our journey. We have a great way yet to travel. It is made out that there is a standard: but it is not made out, by what means we shall prevent mistaking a false standard for that of nature. If from opinion and practice we endeavour to ascertain the standard of nature,  
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we are betray'd into endless perplexities. Viewing this matter historically, nothing appears more various and more wavering than taste in the fine arts. If we judge by numbers, the Gothic taste of architecture will be preferred before that of Greece; and the Chinese taste probably before both. It would be endless, to recount the various tastes of gardening that have prevailed in different ages, and still prevail in different countries. Despising the modest colouring of nature, women of fashion in France daub their cheeks with a red powder. Nay, the unnatural swelling in the neck, a disease peculiar to the inhabitants of the Alps, is relished by that people. But we ought not to be discouraged by such untoward instances. For do we not find the like contradictions with respect to morals? was it not once held lawful, for a man to expose his infant children, and, when grown up, to sell them for slaves? was it not held equally lawful, to punish children for the crime of their parents? was not the murder of an enemy in cold blood an universal practice? what stronger instance can be given,

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ven, than the abominable practice of human sacrifices, not less impious than immoral? Such aberrations from the rules of morality, prove only, that men, originally savage and brutish, acquire not rationality or any delicacy of taste, till they be long disciplined in society. To ascertain the rules of morality, we appeal not to the common sense of savages, but of men in their more perfect state: and we make the same appeal, in forming the rules that ought to govern the fine arts. In neither can we safely rely on a local or transitory taste; but on what is the most universal and the most lasting among polite nations.

In this very manner, a standard for morals has been established with a good deal of accuracy; and so well fitted for practice, that in the hand of able judges it is daily apply'd with general satisfaction. The standard of taste in the fine arts, is not yet brought to such perfection. And there is an obvious reason for its slower progress. The sense of a right and a wrong in action, is conspicuous in the breast of every individual, almost without exception. The sense of a  
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right and a wrong in the fine arts, is more faint and wavering : it is by nature a tender plant, requiring much culture to bring it to maturity : in a barren soil it cannot live ; and in any soil, without cultivation, it is weak and sickly. I talk chiefly with relation to its more refined objects : for some objects make such lively impressions of beauty, grandeur, and proportion, as without exception to command the general taste. There appears to me great contrivance, in distinguishing thus the moral sense from a taste in the fine arts. The former, as a rule of conduct and as a law we ought to obey, must be clear and authoritative. The latter is not intitled to the same authority, since it contributes to our pleasure and amusement only. Were it more strong and lively, it would usurp upon our duty, and call off the attention from matters of greater moment. Were it more clear and authoritative, it would banish all difference of taste : a refined taste would not form a character, nor be intitled to esteem. This would put an end to rivalry, and consequently to all improvement.

But



But to return to our subject. However languid and cloudy the common sense of mankind may be with respect to the fine arts, it is yet the only standard in these as well as in morals. And when the matter is attentively considered, this standard will be found less imperfect than it appears to be at first sight. In gathering the common sense of mankind upon morals, we may safely consult every individual. But with respect to the fine arts, our method must be different: a wary choice is necessary; for to collect votes indifferently, will certainly mislead us: those who depend for food on bodily labour, are totally void of taste; of such a taste at least as can be of use in the fine arts. This consideration bars the greater part of mankind; and of the remaining part, many have their taste corrupted to such a degree as to unqualify them altogether for voting. The common sense of mankind must then be confined to the few that fall not under these exceptions. But as such selection seems to throw matters again into uncertainty, we must be more explicit upon this branch of our subject.

Nothing tends more than voluptuousness to corrupt the whole internal frame, and to vitiate our taste, not only in the fine arts, but even in morals. It never fails, in course of time, to extinguish all the sympathetic affections, and to bring on a beastly selfishness which leaves nothing of man but the shape. About excluding persons of this stamp there will be no dispute. Let us next bring under trial, the opulent whose chief pleasure is expence. Riches, coveted by most men for the sake of superiority and to command respect, are generally bestow'd upon costly furniture, numerous attendants, a princely dwelling, every thing superb and gorgeous, to amaze and humble all beholders. Simplicity, elegance, propriety, and every thing natural, sweet, or amiable, are despised or neglected; for these are not at the command of riches, and make no figure in the public eye. In a word, nothing is relished, but what serves to gratify pride, by an imagined exaltation of the possessor above those he reckons the vulgar. Such a tenor of life contracts the heart and makes every principle give way to self-interest. Benevolence

lence and public spirit, with all their refined emotions, are little felt and less regarded. And if these be excluded, there can be no place for the faint and delicate emotions of the fine arts.

The exclusion of classes so many and various, reduces within a narrow compass those who are qualified to be judges in the fine arts. Many circumstances are necessary to form a judge of this sort: there must be a good natural taste: this taste must be improved by education, reflection, and experience: it must be preserved alive, by a regular course of life, by using the goods of fortune with moderation, and by following the dictates of improved nature which gives welcome to every rational pleasure without deviating into excess. This is the tenor of life which of all contributes the most to refinement of taste; and the same tenor of life contributes the most to happiness in general.

If there appear much uncertainty in a standard that requires so painful and intricate a selection, we may possibly be reconciled to it by the following consideration, That,

with respect to the fine arts, there is less difference of taste than is commonly imagined. Nature hath marked all her works with indelible characters of high or low, plain or elegant, strong or weak. These, if at all perceived, are seldom misapprehended by any taste ; and the same marks are equally perceptible in works of art. A defective taste is incurable ; and it hurts none but the possessor, because it carries no authority to impose upon others. I know not if there be such a thing as a taste naturally bad or wrong ; a taste, for example, that prefers a groveling pleasure before one that is high and elegant. Groveling pleasures are never preferred : they are only made welcome by those who know no better. Differences about objects of taste, it is true, are endless : but they generally concern trifles, or possibly matters of equal rank where the preference may be given either way with impunity. If, on any occasion, the dispute go deeper and persons differ where they ought not, a depraved taste will readily be discovered on one or other side, occasioned by  
imitation,

imitation, custom, or corrupted manners, such as are described above.

If, after all that is said, the standard of taste be thought not yet sufficiently ascertained, there is still one resource in which I put great confidence. What I have in view, are the principles that constitute the sensitive part of our nature. By means of these principles, common to all men, a wonderful uniformity is preserved among the emotions and feelings of different individuals; the same object making upon every person the same impression; the same in kind, at least, if not in degree. There have been aberrations, as above observed, from these principles; but soon or late they always prevail, by restoring the wanderers to the right track. The uniformity of taste here accounted for, is the very thing that in other words is termed the common sense of mankind. And this discovery leads us to means for ascertaining the common sense of mankind or the standard of taste, more unerringly than the selection above insisted on. Every doubt with relation to this standard, occasioned by the practice of different nations  
and

and different times, may be cleared by applying to the principles that ought to govern the taste of every individual. In a word, a thorough acquaintance with these principles will enable us to form the standard of taste; and to lay a foundation for this valuable branch of knowledge, is the declared purpose of the present undertaking.

APPEN-

## A P P E N D I X.

## Terms defined or explained.

1. **C**ONSIDERING the things I am conscious of, some are internal or within my mind, some external or without. Passion, thinking, volition, are internal objects. Objects of sight, of hearing, of smell, of touch, of taste, are external.

2. The faculty by which I discover an internal object, is termed an internal sense : the faculty by which I discover an external object, is termed an external sense. This distinction among the senses is made with reference to their objects merely ; for the senses, external and internal, are equally powers or faculties of the mind.

3. But as self is an object, and the only one that cannot be termed either external  
or

or internal, the faculty by which I am conscious of myself, must be distinguished from both the internal and external senses.

4. By sight we perceive the qualities of figure, colour, motion, &c. : by the ear we perceive the qualities high, low, loud, soft : by touch we perceive rough, smooth, hot, cold, &c. : by taste we perceive sweet, sour, bitter, &c. : by smell we perceive fragrant, stinking, &c. Qualities, from our very conception of them, are not capable of an independent existence ; but must belong to something of which they are the qualities. A thing with respect to its qualities is termed a subject, or *substratum* ; because its qualities rest, as it were, upon it, or are founded upon it. The subject or *substratum* of visible qualities, is termed *substance*, of audible qualities, *sound* ; of tangible qualities, *body*. In like manner, *taste* is the *substratum* of qualities perceived by our sense of tasting ; and *smell* is the *substratum* of qualities perceived by our sense of smelling.

5. Substance and sound are perceived existing in a certain place ; often at a considerable



derable distance from the organ. But smell, touch, and taste, are perceived at the organs of sense.

6. Objects of internal sense are conceived to be attributes : deliberation, reasoning, resolution, willing, consenting, are internal actions : passions and emotions are internal agitations. With regard to the former, I am conscious of being active ; with regard to the latter, I am conscious of being passive.

7. Again, we are conscious of internal action as in the head ; of passions and emotions as in the heart.

8. Many actions may be exerted internally and many effects produced, of which we are not conscious. When we investigate the ultimate cause of animal motions, it is the most probable opinion, that they proceed from some internal power : and if so, we are, in this particular, unconscious of our own operations. But consciousness being imply'd in the very conception of deliberating, reasoning, resolving, willing, consenting, these operations cannot go on without our knowledge. The same is the case

of passions and emotions; for no internal agitation is denominated a passion or emotion, but what we are conscious of.

9. The mind is not always in the same state: it is at times chearful, melancholy, severe, peevish. These different states may not improperly be denominated *tones*. An object, by making an impression, produceth an emotion or passion, which again gives the mind a certain tone suited to it.

10. *Perception* and *sensation* are commonly reckoned synonymous terms, signifying the consciousness we have of objects; but, in accurate language, they are distinguished. The consciousness we have of external objects, is termed *perception*. Thus we are said to perceive a certain animal, a certain colour, sound, taste, smell, &c. The consciousness we have of pleasure or pain arising from external objects, is termed *sensation*. Thus we have a sensation of cold, of heat, of the pain of a wound, of the pleasure of a landscape, of music, of beauty, of propriety, of behaviour, &c. The consciousness we have of internal action, such as deliberation, resolution, choice; is  
never

never termed either a perception or a sensation.

11. *Conception* ought to be distinguished from perception. External things and their attributes are objects of perception : relations among things are objects of conception. I see two men, James and John : the consciousness I have of them is a perception : but the consciousness I have of their relation as father and son, is termed a *conception*. Again, perception relates to objects really existing : conception to fictitious objects, or to those framed by the imagination.

12. *Feeling*, beside denoting one of the external senses, has two different significations. Of these the most common includes not only sensation, but also that branch of consciousness which relates to passions and emotions : it is proper to say, I have a feeling of cold, of heat, or of pain ; and it is not less proper to say, I have a feeling of love, of hatred, of anger, or of any other passion. But it is not applied to internal action : for it is not proper to say, that a man feels himself deliberating or resolving. In a sense less common, feeling is put for the thing that is felt ; and in this sense it is a general

term for every one of our passions and emotions.

13. That we cannot perceive an external object till an impression be made upon our body, is probable from reason, and is ascertained by experience. But it is not necessary that we be made sensible of the impression. It is true, that in touching, tasting, and smelling, we feel the impression made at the organ of sense: but in seeing and hearing, we feel no impression. We know indeed by experience, that before we perceive a visible object, its image is spread upon the *retina tunica*; and that before we perceive a sound, an impression is made upon the drum of the ear: and yet here, we are not conscious either of the organic image or the organic impression: nor are we conscious of any other operation preparatory to the act of perception. All we can say, is, that we see that river, or hear that trumpet \*.

#### 14. Objects

\* Yet a singular opinion that impressions are the only objects of perception, has been espoused by some philosophers of no mean rank; not attending to the foregoing peculiarity in the senses

14. Objects once perceived may be recalled to the mind by the power of memory. When I recall an object in this manner, it appears to me the same as in the original survey, only more faint and obscure. For example, I saw yesterday a spreading oak growing on the brink of a river. I endeavour to recall it to my mind. How is this operation performed? Do I endeavour to form in my mind a picture of it or representative image? Not so. I transport myself ideally to the place where I saw the tree yesterday; upon which I have a perception of the tree and river, similar in all respects to the perception I had of it when I viewed it with my eyes, only more obscure. And in this recollection, I am not conscious of a picture or representative image, more than in the original survey: the perception is of

senses of seeing and hearing, that we perceive objects without being conscious of an organic impression or of any impression. See the treatise upon human nature, where we find the following passage, book 1. p. 4. sect. 2. "Properly speaking it is not our body we perceive when we regard our limbs and members; so that the ascribing a real and corporeal existence to these impressions or to their objects, is an act of the mind as difficult to explain," &c.

the

the tree itself, as at first. I confirm this by another experiment. After attentively surveying a fine statue, I close my eyes. What follows? The same object continues, without any difference but that it is less distinct than formerly. This indistinct secondary perception of an object, is termed *an idea*. And therefore the precise and accurate definition of an idea, in contradistinction to an original perception, is, "That perception or consciousness of a real object, which a person has by exercising the power of memory." Every thing one is conscious of, whether internal or external, passions, emotions, thinking, resolving, willing, heat, cold, &c. as well as external objects, may be recalled as above by the power of memory\*.

## 15. The

\* From this definition of an idea, the following proposition must be evident, That there can be no such thing as an innate idea. If the original perception of an object be not innate, which is obvious, it is not less obvious, that the idea or secondary perception of that object cannot be innate. And yet to prove this self-evident proposition, Locke has bestowed a whole book of his treatise upon human understanding. So necessary it is to give accurate definitions, and so preventive of dispute.

15. The original perceptions of external objects, are either simple or complex. A sound may be so simple as not to be resolvable into parts : so may a taste and a smell. A perception of touch, is generally compounded of the more simple perceptions of hardness or softness, joined with smoothness or roughness, heat or cold, &c. But of all the perceptions of external sense, that of a visible object is the most complex ; because the eye takes in more particulars than any other organ. A tree is composed of its trunk, branches, leaves : it has colour, figure, size : every one of these separately produceth a perception in the mind of the spectator, which are all combined into the complex perception of the tree.

16. The original perception of an object of sight, is more complete, lively, and distinct, than that of any other external sense ; and for that reason, an idea or secondary

dispute are definitions when accurate. Dr Berkeley has taken great pains to prove another proposition equally evident, That there can be no such thing as a general idea. All our original perceptions are of particular objects, and our secondary perceptions or ideas must be equally so,

perception

perception of a visible object, is more distinct and lively than that of any other object. A fine passage in music, may, for a moment, be recalled to the mind with tolerable accuracy: but the idea of any other object, and also of sound after the shortest interval, is extremely obscure.

17. As the range of an individual is commonly within narrow bounds of space, opportunities seldom offer of an enlarged acquaintance with external objects. Original perceptions therefore, and their corresponding ideas, are a provision too scanty for the purposes of life. Language is an admirable contrivance for supplying this deficiency; for by language, the original perceptions of each individual may be communicated to all; and the same may be done by painting and other imitative arts. It is natural to suppose, that the most lively ideas are the most susceptible of being communicated to others. This holds more especially when language is the vehicle of communication; for language hitherto has not arrived at any greater perfection than to express clear and lively ideas. Hence it is, that poets and orators,



rators, who are extremely successful in describing objects of sight, find objects of the other senses too faint and obscure for language. An idea thus acquired of an object at second hand, ought to be distinguished from an idea of memory; though their resemblance has occasioned the same term to be apply'd to both. This is to be regretted; for when knowledge is to be communicated by language, ambiguity in the signification of words is a great obstruction to accuracy of conception. Thus nature hath furnished the means of multiplying ideas without end, and of providing every individual with a sufficient stock to answer, not only the necessities, but even the elegancies of life.

18. Further, man is endued with a sort of creative power: he can fabricate images of things that have no existence. The materials employ'd in this operation, are ideas of sight, which may be taken to pieces and combined into new forms at pleasure: their complexity and vivacity make them fit materials. But a man has no such power over any of his other ideas, whether of the external or in-

ternal senses: he cannot, after the utmost effort, combine these into new forms: his ideas of such objects are too obscure for this operation. An image thus fabricated cannot be called a secondary perception, not being derived from an original perception: the poverty of language however, as in the case immediately above mentioned, has occasioned the same term *idea* to be apply'd to all. This singular power of fabricating images independent of real objects, is distinguished by the name *imagination*.

19. As ideas are the chief materials employ'd in thinking, reasoning, and reflecting, it is of consequence that their nature and differences be understood. It appears now, that ideas may be distinguished into three kinds; first, Ideas or secondary perceptions, properly termed *ideas of memory*; second, Ideas communicated by language or other signs; and, third, Ideas of imagination. These ideas differ from each other in many respects; but the chief foundation of the distinction is the difference of their causes. The first kind are derived from real existences that have been objects of our senses;

senses: language is the cause of the second, or any other sign that has the same power with language; and a man's imagination is to himself the cause of the third. It is scarce necessary to add, that an idea, originally of imagination, being convey'd to others by language or any other vehicle, becomes in the mind of those to whom it is convey'd an idea of the second kind; and again, that an idea of this kind, being afterward recalled to the mind, becomes in that circumstance an idea of memory.

20. Human nature is not so constituted, as that its objects are perceived with indifference: these, with very few exceptions, raise in us either pleasant or painful emotions. External objects, at the same time, appear in themselves agreeable or disagreeable; but with some difference betwixt those which produce organic impressions, and those which affect us from a distance. When we touch a soft and smooth body, we have a pleasant feeling as at the place of contact; and this feeling we distinguish not, at least not accurately, from the agreeableness of the body itself. The same holds

in general with regard to all the organic impressions. It is otherwise in hearing and seeing. A sound is perceived as in itself agreeable; and, at the same time, raises in the hearer a pleasant emotion; an object of sight appears in itself agreeable; and, at the same time, raises in the seer a pleasant emotion. These are accurately distinguished. The pleasant emotion is felt as within the mind: the agreeableness of the object is placed upon the object, and is perceived as one of its qualities or properties. The agreeable appearance of an object of sight, is termed *beauty*; and the disagreeable appearance of such an object is termed *ugliness*.

21. But though beauty and ugliness, in their proper and genuine signification, are confined to objects of sight; yet in a more lax and figurative signification, they are apply'd to objects of the other senses. They are sometimes apply'd even to abstract terms; for it is not unusual to say, *a beautiful theorem*, *a beautiful constitution of government*. But I am inclined to think, that we are led to use such expression by conceiving the

the thing as delineated upon paper, and as in some sort an object of sight.

22. A line composed by a precise rule, is perceived and said to be regular. A straight line, a parabola, a hyperbola, the circumference of a circle, and of an ellipse, are all of them regular lines. A figure composed by a precise rule, is perceived and said to be regular. Thus a circle, a square, a hexagon, an equilateral triangle, are regular figures, being composed by a rule that determines the form of each. When the form of a line or of a figure is ascertained by a rule that leaves nothing arbitrary, the line and the figure are said to be perfectly regular: this is the case of the figures now mentioned; and it is the case of a straight line and of the circumference of a circle. A figure and a line are not perfectly regular where any part or circumstance is left arbitrary. A parallelogram and a rhomb are less regular than a square: the parallelogram is subjected to no rule as to the length of sides, other than that the opposite sides be equal: the rhomb is subjected to no rule as to its angles, other than that the opposite angles be equal.

equal. For the same reason, the circumference of an ellipse, the form of which is susceptible of much variety, is less regular than that of a circle.

23. Regularity, properly speaking, belongs, like beauty, to objects of sight: like beauty, it is also apply'd figuratively to other objects. Thus we say, *a regular government, a regular composition of music, and, regular discipline.*

24. When two figures are composed of similar parts, they are said to be uniform. Perfect uniformity is where the constituent parts of two figures are precisely similar to each other. Thus two cubes of the same dimensions are perfectly uniform in all their parts. An imperfect uniformity is, where the parts mutually correspond, but without being precisely similar. The uniformity is imperfect betwixt two squares or cubes of unequal dimensions; and still more so betwixt a square and a parallelogram.

25. Uniformity is also applicable to the constituent parts of the same figure. The constituent parts of a square are perfectly uniform: its sides are equal and its angles  
are

are equal. . . Wherein then differs regularity from uniformity? for a figure composed of similar or uniform parts must undoubtedly be regular. Regularity is predicated of a figure considered as a whole composed of resembling or uniform parts: uniformity again is predicated of these parts as related to each other by resemblance. We say, a square is a regular, not an uniform figure: but with respect to the constituent parts of a square, we say not that they are regular, but that they are uniform.

26. In things destined for the same use, as legs, arms, eyes, windows, spoons, we expect uniformity. Proportion ought to govern parts intended for different uses. We require a certain proportion betwixt a leg and an arm; in the base, the shaft, the capital, of a pillar; and in the length, the breadth, the height, of a room. Some proportion is also required in different things intimately connected, as betwixt a dwelling-house, the garden, and the stables. But we require no proportion among things slightly connected, as betwixt the table a man writes on and the dog that follows him.

Proportion

Proportion and uniformity never coincide: things perfectly similar are uniform; but proportion is never applied to them: the four sides and angles of a square are equal and perfectly uniform; but we say not that they are proportional. Thus, proportion always implies inequality or difference; but then it implies it to a certain degree only: the most agreeable proportion resembles a *maximum* in mathematics; a greater or less inequality or difference is less agreeable.

27. Order regards various particulars. First, in tracing or surveying objects, we are directed by a sense of order: we conceive it to be more orderly, that we should pass from a principle to its accessories and from a whole to its parts, than in the contrary direction. Next, with respect to the position of things, a sense of order directs us to place together things intimately connected. Thirdly, in placing things that have no natural connection, that order appears the most perfect, where the particulars are made to bear the strongest relation to each other that position can give them. Thus parallelism is the strongest relation  
that



that position can bestow upon straight lines. If they be so placed as by production to intersect each other, the relation is less perfect. A large body in the middle and two equal bodies of less size, one on each side, is an order that produces the strongest relation the bodies are susceptible of by position. The relation betwixt the two equal bodies would be stronger by juxtaposition; but they would not both have the same relation to the third.

28. The beauty or agreeableness of an object, as it enters into the original perception, enters also into the secondary perception or idea. An idea of imagination is also agreeable; though in a lower degree than an idea of memory, where the objects are of the same kind. But this defect in the ideas of imagination is abundantly supply'd by their greatness and variety. For the imagination acting without control, can fabricate ideas of finer visible objects, of more noble and heroic actions, of greater wickedness, of more surprising events, than ever in fact existed. And by communicating these ideas in words, painting, sculpture,

28c. the influence of the imagination is not less extensive than great.

29. In the nature of every man, there is somewhat original, that serves to distinguish him from others, that tends to form a character, and, with the concurrence of external accidents, to make him meek or fiery, candid or deceitful, resolute or timorous, chearful or morose. This original bent is termed *disposition*. Which must be distinguished from a *principle*: no original bent obtains the latter appellation, but what belongs to the whole species. A principle makes part of the common nature of man: a disposition makes part of the nature of this or that man. A *propensity* comprehends both; for it signifies indifferently either a principle or a disposition.

30. *Affection*, signifying a settled bent of mind toward a particular being or thing, occupies a middle place betwixt propensity on the one hand, and passion on the other. A propensity being original, must exist before any opportunity be offered to exert it: affection can never be original; because, having a special relation to a particular object,  
it

it cannot exist till the object be presented. Again, passion depends on the presence of the object, in idea at least, if not in reality: when the idea vanishes, the passion vanishes with it. Affection, on the contrary, once settled on a person, is a lasting connection; and, like other connections, subsists even when we do not think of it. A familiar example will clear the whole. There may be in the mind a propensity to gratitude, which, through want of an object, happens never to be exerted, and which therefore is never discovered even by the person who has it. Another who has the same propensity, meets with a kindly office that makes him grateful to his benefactor: an intimate connection is formed betwixt them, termed *affection*; which, like other connections, has a permanent existence, though not always in view. The affection, for the most part, lies dormant, till an opportunity offer of exerting it: in this circumstance, it is converted into the passion of gratitude; and the opportunity is greedily seized for testifying gratitude in the most complete manner.

31. *Aversion*, I think, must be opposed

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to

to affection, and not to desire, as it commonly is. We have an affection for one person ; we have an aversion to another : the former disposes us to do good to its object, the latter to do ill.

32. What is a sentiment? It is not a perception ; for a perception signifies our consciousness of external objects. It is not consciousness of an internal action ; such as thinking, suspending thought, inclining, resolving, willing, &c. Neither is it a conception of relation amongst objects or of their differences : a conception of this kind, is termed *opinion*. The term *sentiment* is appropriated to those thoughts that are suggested by a passion or emotion.

33. *Attention* is that state of mind which prepares a man to receive impressions. According to the degree of attention, objects make a stronger or weaker impression \*,

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\* Bacon, in his natural history, makes the following observations. Sounds are meliorated by the intension of the sense, where the common sense is collected most to the particular sense of hearing, and the sight suspended. Therefore sounds are sweeter, as well as greater, in the night than in the day : and I suppose they are sweeter to blind men than to others :  
and

In an indolent state, or in a reverie, objects make but a slight impression; far from what they make when they command our attention. In a train of perceptions, no single object makes such a figure as it would do single and apart: for when the attention is divided among many objects, no single object is intitled to a large share. Hence the stillness of night contributes to terror, there being nothing to divert the attention.

Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent.

*Æneid. 2.*

*Zara.* Silence and solitude are ev'ry where!  
Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors  
That hither lead, nor human face nor voice  
Is seen or heard. A dreadful din was wont  
To grate the sense, when enter'd here, from groans  
And howls of slaves condemn'd, from clink of  
chains,  
And crash of rusty bars and creaking hinges:  
And ever and anon the sight was dash'd  
With frightful faces and the meagre looks  
Of grim and ghastly executioners.

and it is manifest that between sleeping and waking, when all the senses are bound and suspended, music is far sweeter than when one is fully waking.

Yet

Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul  
Than did that scene of complicated horrors.

*Mourning Bride, act 5. sc. 8.*

And hence it is, that an object seen at the termination of a confined view, is more agreeable than when seen in a group with the surrounding objects.

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark  
When neither is attended; and, I think,  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When ev'ry goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.

*Merchant of Venice.*

34. In matters of slight importance, attention, in a great measure, is directed by will; and for that reason, it is our own fault if trifling objects make any deep impression. Had we power equally to withhold our attention from matters of importance, we might be proof against any deep impression. But our power fails us here: an interesting object seizes and fixes the attention beyond the possibility of control; and while our attention is thus forcibly attached by one object,

ject, others may solicit for admittance; but in vain, for they will not be regarded. Thus a small misfortune is scarce felt in presence of a greater :

*Lear.* Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious storm  
Invades us to the skin; so 'tis to thee;  
But where the greater malady is fix'd,  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'd'st shun a bear;  
But if thy flight lay tow'rd the roaring sea,  
Thou'd'st meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the  
mind's free,  
The body's delicate : the tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,  
Save what beats there.

*King Lear, act 3. sc. 5.*

35. *Genus, species, modification*, are terms invented to distinguish beings from each other. Individuals are distinguished by their qualities : a large class of individuals enjoying qualities in common, is termed a *genus* : a subdivision of such class is termed a *species*. Again, that circumstance which distinguisheth one genus, one species, or even one individual, from another, is termed

ed a *modification*: the same particular that is termed a *property* or *quality* when considered as belonging to an individual or a class of individuals, is termed a *modification* when considered as distinguishing the individual or the class from another. A black skin and soft curled hair, are properties of a negro: the same circumstances considered as marks that distinguish a negro from a man of a different species, are denominated *modifications*.

36. Objects of sight, being complex, are distinguishable into the several particulars that enter into the composition: these objects are all of them coloured; and they all have length, breadth, and thickness. When I behold a spreading oak, I distinguish in this object, size, figure, colour, and sometimes motion: viewing a flowing river, I distinguish colour, figure, and constant motion: a dye has colour, black spots, six plain surfaces, all equal and uniform. The objects of touch, have all of them extension. Some of them are felt rough, some smooth: some of them are hard, some soft. With respect to the other senses, some of their objects



jects are simple, some complex: a sound, a taste, a smell, may be so simple as not to be distinguishable into any parts: others are perceived to be compounded of different sounds, different tastes, and different smells.

37. The eye at one look can take in a number of objects, as of trees in a field, or men in a crowd: as these objects are distinct from each other, each having a separate and independent existence, they are distinguishable in the mind as well as in reality; and there is nothing more easy, than to abstract from some and to confine our contemplation to others. A large oak with its spreading branches, fixes our attention upon itself, and abstracts us from the shrubs that surround it. In the same manner, with respect to compounded sounds, tastes, or smells, we can fix our thoughts upon any one of the component parts, abstracting our attention from the rest. But the power of abstraction is not confined to objects that are separable in reality as well as mentally: it also takes place where there can be no real separation. The size, the figure, the colour, of a tree, are inseparably connected,

and cannot exist independent of each other: the same of length, breadth, and thickness: and yet we can mentally confine our observations to one of these, neglecting or abstracting from the rest. Here abstraction takes place where there cannot be a real separation.

38. This power of abstraction is of great utility. A carpenter considers a log of wood, with regard to hardness, firmness, colour, and texture: a philosopher, neglecting these properties, makes the log undergo a chymical analysis; and examines its taste, its smell, and its component principles: the geometrician confines his reasoning to the figure, the length, breadth, and thickness. In general, every artist, abstracting from all other properties, confines his observations to those which have a more immediate connection with his profession.

39. Hence clearly appears the meaning of an *abstract term*, and *abstract idea*. If in viewing an object, we can abstract from some of its parts or properties, and attach ourselves to others; there must be the same facility, when we recall this object to the mind

mind in idea. This leads directly to the definition of an abstract idea, *viz.* "A partial view of a complex object, limited to one or more of the component parts or properties, laying aside or abstracting from others." A word that denotes an abstract idea, is called an *abstract term*.

40. The power of abstraction is bestowed upon man, for the purposes solely of reasoning. It tends greatly to the facility as well as clearness of any process of reasoning, that, withdrawing from every other circumstance, we can confine our attention to the single property we desire to investigate.

41. Abstract ideas, may, I think, be distinguished into three different kinds, all equally subservient to the reasoning faculty. Individuals appear to have no end; and did we not possess the faculty of distributing them into classes, the mind would be lost in an endless variety, and no progress be made in knowledge. It is by the faculty of abstraction that we distribute beings into *genera* and *Species*: finding a number of individuals connected by certain qualities common to all, we give a name to these

individuals considered as thus connected; which name, by gathering them together into one class, serves in a curt manner to express the whole of these individuals as distinct from others. Thus the word *animal* serves to denote every being which hath self-motion; and the words *man*, *horse*, *lion*, &c. answer similar purposes. This is the first and most common sort of abstraction; and it is of the most extensive use, by enabling us to comprehend in our reasoning whole kinds and sorts, instead of individuals without end. The next sort of abstract ideas and terms comprehends a number of individual objects considered as connected by some occasional relation. A great number of persons collected together in one place, without any other relation but merely that of contiguity, are denominated *a crowd*: in forming this term, we abstract from sex, from age, from condition, from dress, &c. A number of persons connected by being subjected to the same laws and to the same government, are termed *a nation*; and a number of men subjected to the same military

tary command, are termed *an army*. A third sort of abstraction is, where a single property or part, which may be common to many individuals, is selected to be the subject of our contemplation; for example, whiteness, heat, beauty, length, roundness, head, arm.

42. Abstract terms are a happy invention: it is by their means chiefly, that the particulars which we make the subject of our reasoning, are brought into close union, and separated from all others however naturally connected. Without the aid of such terms, the mind could never be kept steady to its proper subject, but would perpetually be in hazard of assuming foreign circumstances or neglecting what are essential. In a word, a general term denotes in a curt manner certain objects occasionally combined. We can, without the aid of language, compare real objects by intuition, when these objects are present; and, when absent, we can compare them by means of the ideas we have of them: but when we advance farther, and attempt to make inferences, and draw conclusions, we always employ abstract

abstract terms, even in thinking. It would be as difficult to reason without them, as to perform operations in algebra without signs : for there is scarce any reasoning without some degree of abstraction ; and we cannot abstract to purpose without making use of general terms. Hence it follows, that without language man would scarce be a rational being.

43. The same thing, in different respects, has different names. With respect to certain qualities, it is termed a *substance* ; with respect to other qualities, a *body* ; and with respect to qualities of all sorts, a *subject* : it is termed a *passive subject* with respect to an action exerted upon it ; an *object* with respect to a percipient ; a *cause* with respect to the effect it produces ; and an *effect* with respect to its cause.

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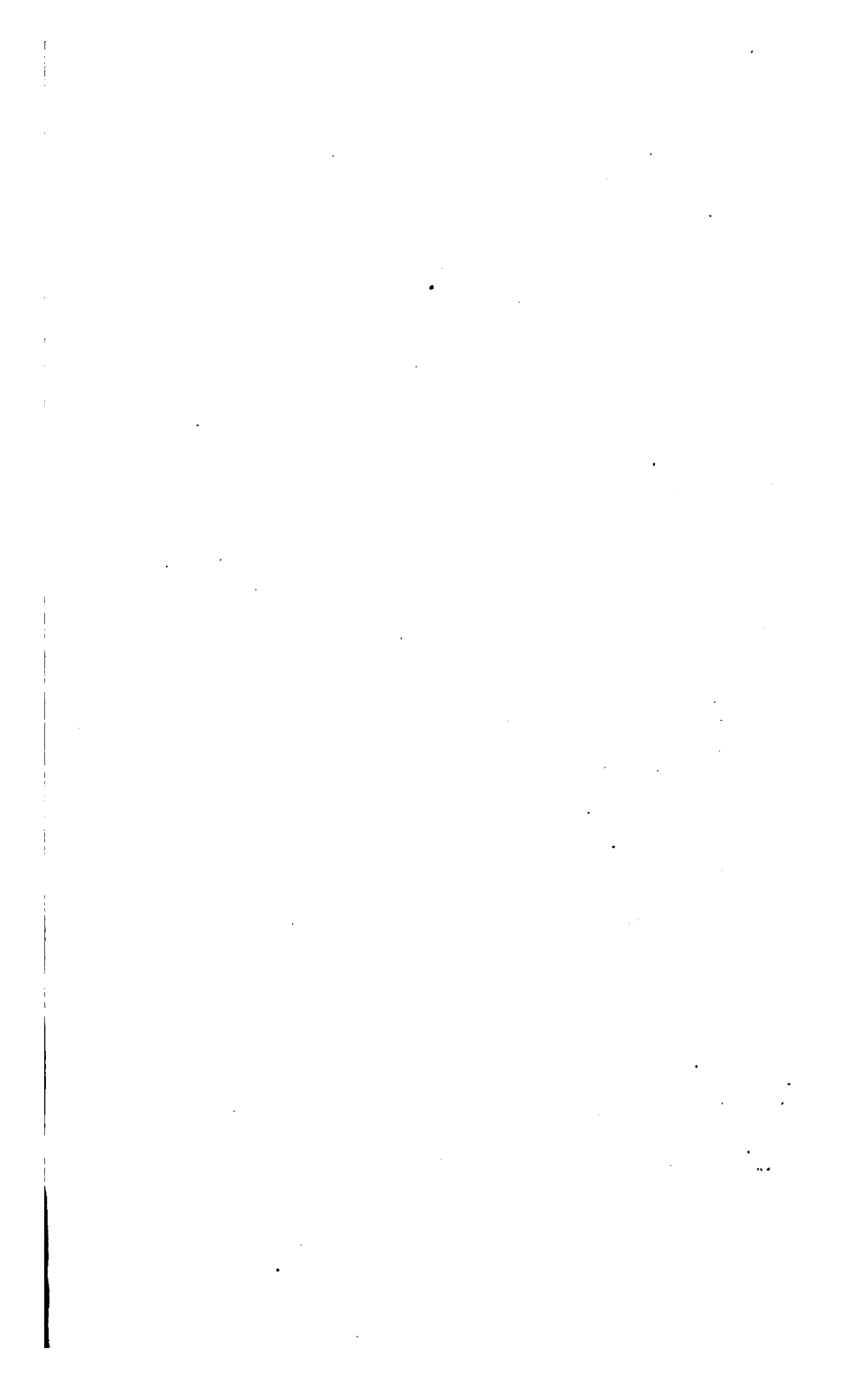
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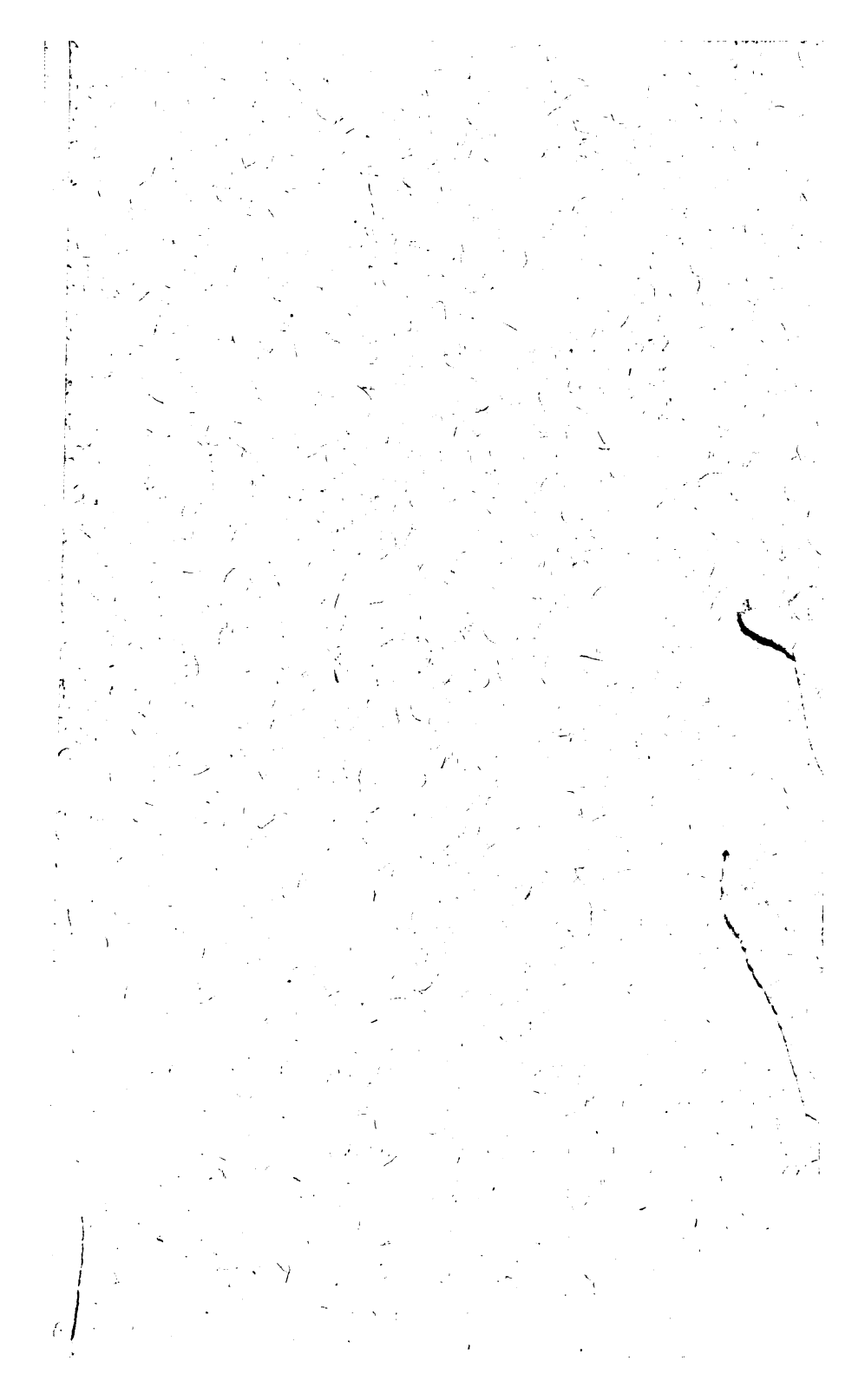
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